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# THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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November/December 1984

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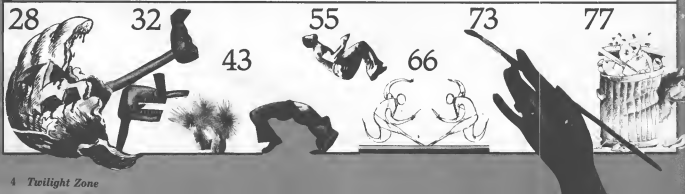
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Cover photo of Sling from Dune © 1984 Universal City Studios, Inc.



Tritten

# Leaders of the Banned

A sign in a shop window proclaims, "Rare, Out of Print, & Nonexistent Books." This gag appeared in a recent *New Yorker* cartoon, but it's by no means so unlikely; one-time "nonexistent books" are now available at your local bookstore, and listed in formal bibliographies such as *Bibliotheca Chimaerica*, a catalogue of imaginary books, published by Harvard's Houghton Library.

I hate to say "I told you so," but I predicted this state of affairs in "Black Man with a Horn," a story I wrote back in the seventies. "We are living in a day when there are no more secrets," I had an old-timer say, "when my twelve-year-old nephew can buy his own grimoire, and books with titles like *The Encyclopaedia of Ancient and Forbidden Knowledge* are remaindered at every discount store. Though my friends from the twenties would have hated to admit it, the notion of stumbling across some moldering old 'black book' in the attic of a deserted house—some lexicon of spells and chants and hidden lore—is merely a quaint fantasy. If the *Necronomicon* actually existed, it would be out in Bantam paperback with a preface by Lin Carter."

Well, a book called *The Necronomicon* is out in paperback now (though it's published by Avon), and there've been at least three other works that used the same title—as ROBERT M. PRICE recounts in *Hexes and Hoaxes* on page 59. As for the prolific Lin Carter, he's busy inventing alleged "chapters" from this celebrated tome and publishing them in magazines like Price's own *Crypt of Cthulhu* (35 Elmbrook Place, Bloomfield, NJ 07003, \$2 each), specializing in Lovecraft scholarship.



Price



Bloch



J. Lofficier



R. Lofficier

In its latest issue, #23, the amiable Price—who, in real life, teaches ethics and comparative religion at Montclair State College in New Jersey—has persuaded a host of notables, including Frank Belknap Long, Ramsey Campbell, and Brian Lumley, to quote passages from such classics of forbidden lore as the *Revelations of Glaaki*, the *Third Cryptical Book of Hsan*, and the dread *Book of Eibon*. Good clean fun.

(Still, there's a sleazy crowd who'd have you believe that such books actually exist and that they're filled with occult wisdom. Take the recent ad in the *Llewellyn New Times*, out in Minneapolis, for "the granddaddy of them all, the book which your mother warned you about, the book which, if it ever fell into the *wrong hands*, could lead to the destruction of all we hold near and dear: *The Necronomicon*! We are a little nervous about having this monster around, folks. Every time we get it in stock, things begin to happen around here. The first time our vp, Steve Bucher, tried it out at home, he managed to create thunder and lightning in his house on a sunny day. If this thing is all a hoax, as some claim, it's a pretty convincing hoax." They then proceed to hawk, for fifty bucks, two books cited in Price's article: The George Hay/Colin Wilson *Necronomicon*—which Wilson himself admits is "an obvious spoof"—and the collection of warmed-over magic spells now published by Avon. A high-priced edition of the latter, I'm embarrassed to say, was once even advertised here in TZ. *Caveat emptor!*)

One of Lovecraft's favorite disciples was ROBERT BLOCH, who cooked up a couple of notorious

"banned books" of his own, *Cultes des Goules* and *De Vermis Mysteriis* ("Mysteries of the Worm") by one "Ludvig Prinn," and used them—as HPL had used his *Necronomicon*—to spice up his *Weird Tales* contributions. In the tradition of that legendary magazine (with a dash of E.C. Comics thrown in for good measure), we present Bloch's *Pumpkin*, a gleefully ghoulish Halloween treat.

Another distinguished *Weird Tales* alumnus is the Connecticut short story writer and poet JOSEPH PAYNE BRENNAN ("Levitation," TZ November '82), a group of whose recent poems appeared in our July/August issue. *Bag Hag*, on page 87, typifies his unique mixture of tenderness and the macabre.

LARRY TRITTEN is blessed with an endlessly fertile imagination and a sense of humor that surfaces at unexpected moments to wink in your face. His sf tales are filled with witty throwaways, like this one from an off-world barroom scene: "We were in the Club that night at our customary table ... me hoisting petards, a drink I enjoy in spite of its reputed tendency to raze taste buds." His "Three Bananas" (TZ March '82) gave us a 21st-century radio station that played only the sound of waves: "They were doing the beaches of Southern England and there were some very nice breakers coming in,



Bloch



Heyrman



Brizzolara

Lindop

and the underground film *Eraserhead*. Speaking of which, its innovative young director, David Lynch, has since gone on to *Dune*, the subject of this issue's cover story (and an upcoming interview) by the Franco-American husband-and-wife team of JEAN-MARC and RANDY LOFFICIER, correspondents for the French film journal *L'Ecran Fantastique* and contributors to numerous magazines here and abroad.

PETER HEYRMAN takes a theme from *The Golden Bough* and gives it a violent rock beat in *Leader of the Band*. He describes himself as "a writer in residence at the Little Campus Inn Writing Project" (he won't tell me what the hell that means), and says, "I've been writing ever since I can remember (not in the womb, I don't think)." Heyrman has worked for a couple of newspapers and a small magazine in Key West. He's had other stories published, but this is the first in a national magazine.

With the '84 elections now upon us, the problem, and plight, of Mexican immigrants is very much in the news—which makes a well-crafted traditional supernatural tale like *Borderland* seem curiously timely. It's one of those all-too-rare stories that combine the weird with the daily realities of working life; though "nightly" realities may be more accurate for both *Borderland* and its author, JOHN BRIZZOLARA, who currently tends bar in San Diego. Brizzolara has a particular talent for tales of this sort; he's sold fiction to *Amazing*, *Whispers*, and Lin Carter's short-lived revival of *Weird Tales*.

There's still another *Weird Tales* revival currently in the works. Let's hope that this time it succeeds; God knows the market needs it. —TK

# THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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perfect for a relaxed mood." He's also given to writing parodies of "personal" classified ads, maverick manifestoes (leafing through *Popular Computing* last year, I came across a defiant essay entitled "I Do Not Process Words!"), and tongue-in-cheek crossword puzzles ("6 Down: Horror story about puppy jugglers"). There's a Gilbert Sorrentino novel called *Aberration of Starlight*; no phrase better captures the flavor of the strange Tritten tale in this issue.

'Tis the season, in fact, for strange tales, even tales of love—as TIMOTHY LINDOP demonstrates. Lindop has spent the past ten years in construction work but now, armed with a degree in political literature from U. Mass., is entering a career in local community-access television. The haunting *Autumn Love* is his first published fiction.

If the face in its photo-illustration by ROSIE MACKIEWICZ looks a shade familiar, it's because the same face (minus a great deal of paint) appears above. It belongs to MICHAEL BLAINE, author of *Kush*, who happens to be Mackiewicz's husband. Blaine, an ex-Village Voice writer who's now chairman of journalism at New York's LaGuardia College, has one of the most savage with this side of Stanley Elkin—as you'll see in future TZ stories. This one reads like a cross between Robert Bloch's horror classic "The Mannikin"

# Books

by Thomas M. Disch



Illustration © 1984 Thomas M. Disch

It has been nearly a quarter of a century since Philip K. Dick wrote his eleventh, and penultimate, mainstream novel, *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike*. For much of that time the manuscripts of Dick's unpublished mainstream novels were warehoused by a California university library—a monument to the purity of American publishing, by whose unwritten decree it has been determined that no writer who publishes genre work under his own name shall publish work outside that genre, ever. Dick's high reputation within the field of science fiction was unavailing, or nearly so. One small press, Entwhistle Books, founded by two of his most loyal admirers, brought out *Confessions of a Crap Artist* in 1975 (it was written in 1959), and it met with the fate common to most small-press books: it was ignored. The mainstream press ignored it, in accordance with the decree noted above; the SerLit press ignored it, since Dick, as a science fiction writer, could not be credited as a creator of Serious Literature (where, after all, did he teach?); and science fiction reviewers and readers ignored it, by and large, since it was not sf and science fiction reviewers and readers lack the enzymes that would allow them to digest a

mainstream novel.

Now, nine years later, *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike* is being published (at \$19.50) by another small press, Mark V. Ziesing (who has already published two fine books by Gene Wolfe), and though it is much too late in the day to effect any significant change in Dick's posthumous image as Prophet and Martyr of the Drug Era (a reputation which requires that his mainstream work be neglected), it should be stated for the record, somewhere, just how good or bad the book is and, correlatively, how grave was the injustice of its nonpublication in Dick's lifetime. For the record: it's a very good book.

It is not, however, a great book. It notably lacks both the imaginative power and the intellectual intensity of his best sf novels. Put it another way: he wrote at least a dozen better books, including his last, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, a mainstream novel disguised by its publisher as science fiction.

A fairer apples-to-apples comparison would be to other mainstream novels written at about the same period and dealing with the same theme, marital strife in suburbia. Off the top of my head I can think of four books that treat that subject with more panache and/or power: Evan Connell's *Mrs. Bridge* (1958), John Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (1960), Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road* (1961), and Philip Roth's *Letting Go* (1962). Dick lacks Connell's sociological cool, Updike's concinnity, Yates's prosecutorial zeal, and Roth's ability to lose himself inside his characters' imaginary skins; yet all of these were qualities he clearly was aiming for in *The Man Whose Teeth*—aiming for and, in large part, achieving.

Putting aside all odious comparisons, I can testify that though I began reading it from a sense of duty (it's hard, even admiring Dick, not to think there must be some reason the book remained unpublished for so long), I soon was in thrall to the story and had finished it in only three otherwise hectic days, which, given my reading speed, qualifies it as an unputdownable page-turner. The plot concerns two households, both alike in suburban dignity: the Runcibles (Leo, a Jewish realtor, and Janet, an alcoholic slut) and the Dombrosios (Walter, a package

designer, and Sherry, a proto-feminist shrew whose taming becomes the real subject of the novel). The ostensible subject of the novel is a feud that develops between Leo and Walter, in the course of which Walter hoaxes Leo into believing he's discovered a Neanderthal skull on his property—whence, the book's odd title. (This hoax is recapitulated, very little changed, in Dick's sf novel, *The Penultimate Truth*, written four years later, where it functions as padding, pure and simple. When at a loss for wordage, Dick, it seems, was not above cannibalizing his unpublished mainstream novels, for which thriftiness some young Ph.D. candidate may already be blessing his memory.)

The most remarkable thing about the book is how timely it is ... for 1984. All its themes and tensions seem to spring from the present intellectual climate, not that of 1960. The character of Sherry is a nightmare vision of a liberated woman, who, from the safe vantage of her righteous demands, proceeds systematically to destroy her husband. Dick portrayed women of this type with an accuracy (and obsessiveness) that bespeaks close and long acquaintance, and it may be this element in the book (rather than Dick's sf affiliations) that kept it so long from print. For Dick's portraits of the man-eating Sherry and the craven, bumbling Janet will offend present-day feminists in proportion as those portraits register as true and felt. If Dick was a male chauvinist pig, he was as candid and conscious about the matter as any Catholic archbishop explaining why women cannot in their nature be priests. Candor and self-knowledge are not desirable traits in an enemy, whom we would all rather regard as hypocritical and self-deluded.

Though Dick did not attempt another mainstream novel until *Timothy Archer*, twenty years later, the work he put in on the first eleven of them was not wasted. The very next book he would write after *The Man Whose Teeth* was *The Man in the High Castle*, his first undoubted masterpiece, the first novel to emerge from the sf ghetto that could be called, in the marketers' phrase, "suitable for mature audiences." There is no single hero in whose dragon-proofed skin we can ride off to confront the forces of evil. Instead (as

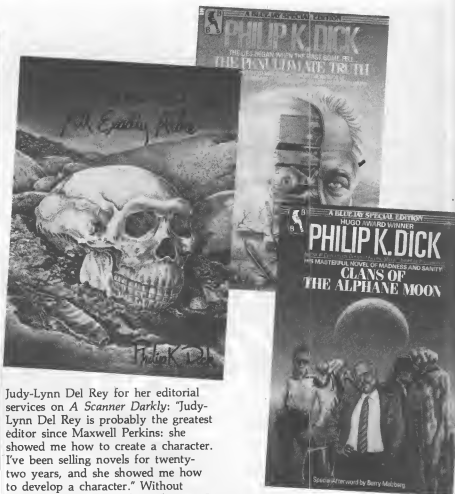
# Books

in *The Man Whose Teeth*), there is a shifting point of view that gives each character in turn the opportunity of defining the fictional world in his or her own terms. Seen so, few characters come off as complete scoundrels. Yet this is not to say that Dick, comprehending all, is all-forgiving. Evil is endemic in his world(s), a tumor so deeply enmeshed in the social fabric that surgery is not possible. All his characters bear the contagion of it. While most grown-ups might accept this as a fair description of reality, sf writers and readers have a long-standing commitment to the use of art as an anodyne to such a dark sense of things.

The wonder is not that Dick's mainstream books have gone unpublished for so long, but that his sf novels were published at all. By his own account he led a very hand-to-mouth existence most of the time, until he had the good fortune to have Hollywood process one of his novels into an adventure spectacle memorable only for its art direction. The eight-days' wonder of *Blade Runner* did serve to draw attention to the author at a time when his life (and work) had taken a particularly picturesque direction. The klieg lights all turned his way—and then, with a flawless sense of timing, he died, and began to be famous. He would have plotted the story no differently himself.

The happy consequence, for his estate and for us, his readers, is that while the morbid curiosity about his messy life continues (and already two biographies are said to be in the works), his books are back in print. Collect them while you can. DAW has brought out several at mass-market paperback prices, including some of his most powerful novels: *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch* (Dick's most dazzling use of the novel as a narrative fun house, with a new trapdoor to fall through at each turn of the maze), *Ubik* (his satire on the psychology of the Consumer Culture), and the vividly dismal account of the nightmare underside of that same culture, *A Scanner Darkly*.

(The latest all-sf issue of *The Missouri Review*, Vol. VII, No. 2, contains a 1980 interview with Dick that is marvelously revealing, and one of the oddest things it reveals is Dick's professed indebtedness to



Judy-Lynn Del Rey for her editorial services on *A Scanner Darkly*: "Judy-Lynn Del Rey is probably the greatest editor since Maxwell Perkins: she showed me how to create a character. I've been selling novels for twenty-two years, and she showed me how to develop a character." Without wishing to gainsay Dick's judgment, I wonder if there may not be reason to examine the original manuscript of this novel to see whether Dick's instincts as a writer may not have been, after all, superior to those of Mrs. Del Rey as an editor. And if—as was the case with so many other of his novels, most scandalously the sawn-in-half *Unteleported Man*—it turns out that editing consisted mainly of editing-out, a case could be made for publishing the text as originally written.)

DAW has not been alone in keeping Dick in print. The new trade paperback house, Bluejay Books; has plans to bring out five of the novels of the early sixties with afterwords by various hands, including my own (for *The Penultimate Truth*, \$5.95) and Barry Malzberg's (for *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, \$6.95). Like myself, Malzberg is somewhat thrown off stride by having to reconcile his high enthusiasm for Dick's oeuvre with the fact that the book in hand doesn't represent Dick at his inimitable best. Malzberg suggests that Dick characteristically thought of himself as

one who wrote "novels whose style, characters, and movement were designed for obsolescence.... It is possible to see these novels as fundamental evasions of their material; it is possible to see *Clans of the Alphane Moon* as a work which domesticates, tames, trivializes and disperses implicitly terrifying material. That material: angst, alienation, anomie, insanity, loss, fury, greed, evil, impotence, various species of human delusion, alien delusion, political apostasy." Dick becomes, in Malzberg's version, one more saint in the Pantheon of Inevitable Failure: his career is summed up as "exuding a sense of waste, the same waste that seems to come from most careers in this category [i.e. science fiction]: truncated possibilities, wholesale elisions of possibility, small and large failures in the body of the work. Still, what is one to do?" At the end of his afterword, Malzberg does a summing-up: "*Clans of the Alphane Moon* was written for \$1500 (\$750 on signature, \$750 on delivery) as a

paperback original for Ace Books during the last good year of most of our lives, 1963 [sic!]; and for the first ten years of its existence, accumulated to the author (after commissions had been deducted) considerably less than \$2000. This was not good money even for the time; and in the light of the ambition, the invention, the energy of the book, the question of return is appalling."

Happily, Dick is able in this case to have the last word, for at the end of the radio interview reprinted in *The Missouri Review*, he addressed himself to this very issue: "Let me make just one statement: I hope people will come into the science fiction field and write science fiction and not listen to people like Robert Silverberg and Barry Malzberg and Harlan Ellison and Kurt Vonnegut, who say either they don't write science fiction or they never did write science fiction or they will not write it in the future. I mean, science fiction is a lot of fun to write, and it's worth all the bad financial breaks to do it. I don't regret one thing. Well, that's not true. I regret it when they turn off my electricity. For instance, I went through periods when I sent off the manuscript of *Flow My Tears, the Policeman Said*

and didn't have enough money to send it first class. I had to send it by third-class mail. That's Pressure City when you get to the point where you can't pay the postage to mail off a manuscript after it's already been bought. We're back to the artist in the garret again. You know he's going to starve his ass off if he writes science fiction; he'll never get any recognition, and he'll never get any money. But he will have a hell of a lot of fun, and he ought to know what he's in it for. If he wants to go into writing for the money, let him go elsewhere. Writers are stupid if they think they're in it for money. Why did they get into writing in the first place? Whoever promised them a lot of money? Where was Ellison promised a lot of money? Where did it say that Malzberg was promised fame and money, as if it was his birthright, his patrimony. Nonsense. We're lucky they publish us at all. They could actually abolish the field of science fiction, and then we really would have to write something else. We're lucky that the category still exists. Let's hear it for the science fiction writers who are coming along and still writing science fiction and flip the bird to the people who want money." **17**

## More Books

Shortly after putting the world on notice, in the July/August **TZ**, that "the two best novels ever written about childhood" were undoubtedly Booth Tarkington's *Penrod* and Steven Millhauser's *Edwin Mulhhouse*, I received an odd-looking package from Phil Zuckerman, president of Applewood Books (Box 2870, Cambridge, MA 02139), containing five slim brightly colored paperbacks, a brief note—"Please add these books to your list"—and an equally brief postscript: "They're a little like Jerome K. Jerome." The books were the first five installments of a "serial novel"—a breed you probably thought had died with Dickens—whose full title is *The Personal History, Adventures, Experiences & Observations of Peter Leroy*. The author, Eric Kraft, is a transplanted Long Islander now living in Newburyport, and *Peter Leroy* is

his fictionalized autobiography (his hometown of Babylon appears as "Babbington," Clam Capital of the Western World). As the full title suggests, Kraft's tale is whimsical, cozy, old-fashioned (despite, as Peter moves through boyhood, the growing presence of sex)—and, yes, it is a little like Jerome K. Jerome. It's also like a cross between James Thurber and that fat new book "... *And Ladies of the Club*," recounting family anecdotes and small-town gossip with humor and affection—though not without a sigh for times gone by. The *Peter Leroy* series, which comes out four times a year, began in 1982 with *My Mother Takes a Tumble* and, is now up to book #8, *Call Me Larry*. Each title, at 96 pages, sells for \$4.95, but one can subscribe to four books for \$16 or to eight for \$30. Neat idea.

Here's another: *The Psychotronic*

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# More Books

Encyclopedia of Film (Ballantine, \$15.95), a fact-packed 815-page paperback guide to B-movies (and some a good deal farther down the alphabet) by Michael Weldon, assisted by Charles Beesley, Akira Fitton, and Fangoria's own Bob Martin.

"Psychotronic," says Weldon, "was originally meant to suggest a combination of weird horror films and electronic gadget-filled science fiction movies. I thought I'd made it up, but it later turned out I'd stolen it from *The Psychotronic Man*, a Chicago-made film about a maniac barber who kills people with psychic energy." Weldon's book surveys, in capsule form, more than three thousand such epics ("exploitation films of any sort, really," he explains: "biker movies, rock 'n' roll movies, musclemen movies, 3-D movies, '60s beach movies, Mexican movies with subtitles—you get the idea"), from *Abbott and Costello Go to Mars* ("Aren't you tired," he asks, "of movie books beginning with Abbott and Costello?") to *Zontar, The Thing from Venus* and *Zotz!* ("Plastic Zotz coins were given to the first theater patrons"). Most of these titles aren't listed in standard guides like Leonard Maltin's frequently updated TV Movies (NAL, \$4.95). Maltin's book is still the better value, covering four times the number of films at a third the price, but Weldon's makes a nice companion volume.

Capsule descriptions are okay when you're looking up cast members during a commercial, but for really thorough coverage of the genre classics, I recommend Bill Warren's *Keep Watching the Skies!*, Volume 1 (McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640), a highly opinionated in-depth guide to sf films from 1950 to '57. The price is an outrageous \$39.95 (maybe someone will have the good sense to bring it out in paperback), but for this you (or your rich friend) will get more critical insights, more entertaining personal observations, and more sheer information than you'll find anywhere else on movies such as *Them!* (In the original prints, the titles . . . were printed in a vivid red and blue, the only instance of color titles in a black-and-white film that I have ever encountered), *The Neanderthal Man* (whose facial makeup keeps changing, "as if different artists worked each day"), and *Voodoo Woman*: though he dismisses this little gem as "one of



Mutant from *This Island Earth* (1955), in the book *Keep Watching the Skies!* "Note," says Bill Warren, "that his pants actually fade into his legs."

the worst movies ever made," he's generous in quoting from its script ("They mocked me, Chaka. They call me crazy. I could not tamper with nature, my colleagues said," etc.). An appendix lists, by title, dozens of films announced but never made, some of which sound as if they'd be surefire Gold Turkey nominees (*Around the Earth in 90 Minutes*, *The Girl from Two Million A.D.*, *I Buried the Devil*, *Snuffy Smith's Rocket Ship*). Warren devotes nearly four pages to that strange Lovecraftian frog-man movie *The Maze* ("Either you find the story interesting if incredible, or you find it boring and ludicrous"), quotes extensively from the script (I'm told John Landis had a hand in supplying Warren with archive material), provides a rare photograph of the film's pathetic-looking frog creature, delivers commonsensical judgments on the often illogical script, and concludes on just the right affectionate note: "For those with an exotic sense of sympathy, the ending of this rather grotesque little film can be surprisingly moving." So is this book; I eagerly await Volume 2.

Speaking of Lovecraft, his hardcover publisher, Arkham House of Sauk City, Wisconsin, is busily preparing corrected editions of the master's fiction under the direction of

Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi (TZ July/August '83), who—as Joyce scholars have just done with *Ulysses*—has gone back to HPL's original manuscripts and discovered hundreds of errors in the standard printed text. Meanwhile, Arkham House collectors can take inventory with Sheldon Jaffery's *Horrors and Unpleasantries* (Bowling Green University, \$7.95 paper, \$14.95 cloth), subtitled "A Bibliographical History & Collector's Price Guide to Arkham House." The prices are rather shocking; it appears that books I bought for three dollars at Dana's dusty little bookshop on Weybosset Street in Providence are now fetching \$125. Needless to say, Jaffery is himself an Arkham House collector and understands "the suspicion that someone, somewhere, has a copy for sale for just a few dollars less than you paid." The one thing his bibliography lacks, mysteriously, is a contents list for each book; we get pages of publishing history, but never learn what stories are included. The book does have, like Warren's, an appendix listing projects that never materialized, including an untitled collection of Robert Heinlein's fiction and an illustrated edition of William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*. Sigh!

—TK





# Screen

by Gahan Wilson



"Their moms must be proud of them." Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis in *Ghostbusters*.

**T**his very probably won't be the fairest or kindest or most tolerant column I've written for you, but there is a good reason, and I hope you will be understanding if I'm a little thoughtless, cruel, or even the tiniest bit vicious for the odd, unguarded moment.

The truth is, we are once again in the depths—or heights, whatever—of the Summer Season, which means that all the moviemakers, their greedy fantasies haunted by visions of hordes of school kids on the loose and sweaty masses lusting after air conditioning, are crawling all over each other like alligators in a pit, desperately trying to launch their pet projects on us all. The result is that I have lost count of the films I've seen in these last few weeks—not only those of some quality, but a ghastly rash of godawful ones (I see no point in even inflicting their titles on you), which I viewed just in case some goodie had been saddled with bad PR or inferior posters or whatever; and I am just a little tired and crochety now, and may say something thoughtless if a fly lights on me as I type.

The sad fact is that there's only one movie of the bunch I feel is really and truly worth your time: *Ghostbusters*. But then, I suppose

you should feel properly grateful if you manage to come up with even one good movie per summer. (There, I feel better already! Isn't the resiliency of the human spirit a marvelous thing?) Let's talk about it right off the bat. Then please feel free to skip the rest of the column if you wish, as it'll just be me grousing.

*Ghostbusters* is one of those really dandy comedies which make me want to unfurl the flag and salute my heritage. Only Americans can make movies like *Ghostbusters*, because only Americans are nutsy in exactly the right way. W.C. Fields was a great American nut who could pull this sort of thing off. So were the Marx Brothers; so are these fools. *Ghostbusters* was produced and directed by Ivan Reitman (if I have any complaint, it's that the movie could have used a little more zip and bad taste in the direction). It was written by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis, who also have starring roles. So do Bill Murray, who has become a master of a great American comic type—the disreputable wise ass; Rick Moranis, as an endearing nerd; and Sigourney Weaver, who unashamedly reveals herself as a very funny woman and who, if it struck her fancy, could probably take over where Mae West left off. All their moms and apple pies and

hometowns must be proud of them.

There is nothing even slightly serious about the movie. Basically it's a lot of laughs about the possibility of humanity's having higher powers—and/or immortality—a notion which leads to an extended comic routine on Armageddon. The most visible targets are pop supernatural epics such as *The Exorcist II* and big-scale Spielbergian solemnities such as *Close Encounters* about superduper beings we simple folk just wouldn't understand. Among the other targets are sex, the Pillsbury Doughboy, the social conscience of clientele in expensive restaurants, and those cards Professor Rhine designed down at Duke University, the ones with all the stars and wavy lines. They all get a red, white, and blue clobbering; none of them will ever be the same—and high time.

The plot is a cute one about a bunch of psychic investigators who fail in the groves of academe, thanks to bad luck, stupidity, and the misfortune of being saddled with Murray. Forced to make a living with their specialty in a more mundane sphere of being (otherwise known as "the real world") and not inclined to do things halfway, they perform a jazzy renovation on an abandoned firehouse in Soho, staff it with Annie Potts as an impeccably humiliating

# Screen

receptionist, design a snappy logo, launch an advertising blitz on tv, and, after ridding a posh hotel of a fat, Belushian ghost who gobbles the food from its room-service carts and banquet tables, are such big business that they're paid homage by *Time* magazine and other bastions of our civilization.



"Like a badly managed world tour." Harrison Ford and a would-be assassin in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

It's inevitable that such heroes come sooner or later to the notice of the biggest supernatural baddie of them all, and sure enough, one day Sigourney Weaver finds none other than the Devil himself in the compact refrigerator of her compact kitchen. When he fries eggs on her formica counter and otherwise raises high-tech hell, she takes her case to our guys, resulting in a vast cosmic clash of the forces of good and evil that builds to a ridiculous climax. (Don't worry, I'm not going to spoil the movie and say who wins!)

Okay, that was the good movie. *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* is not the good movie. I had expected it probably would be. I remember going on and on about how swell I thought *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was, and I had another look at it just recently to see if it

stood up. It does. But *ItatToD* is not another *RotLA*. Sometimes those little hopes and dreams work out, and sometimes they don't.

It starts out very nicely, mind. A great razzmatazz opener in a Chinese nightclub with the heroine (Kate Capshaw) singing and dancing away, backed up with a bunch of chorine

cuties. It soon blurs into a dangerous confrontation with Jones and a colorful bunch of toughies, then zips into a dandy escape involving an inspired fall through a series of awnings and a roaring dashaway in a gorgeous car. Next thing, we're off on a foredoomed airplane flight while the villain sneers with unfeigned delight at the certain trap ahead!

Okay? Yessir!

Oh, there are little things, bothersome bits, but small stuff. Nothing to really worry about. The humorous shuffling with the poison and the antidote goes on a little too long, maybe; but then, Spielberg's always on the edge of trouble whenever he attempts humor, so what the hell; and I wasn't all that crazy about the introduction of the cute little Dondi-style Oriental Kid, Short Round, as played by Ke Huy Quan . . .

But I think, maybe it was when they were sliding wildly down a mountain after they had all fallen safely like cartoon characters—like Daffy Duck—from an obviously fatal height and survived easily, that a little prickly something began to pester the back of my neck.

Also, I was wondering when the "prelim slammer," as I have come to call such things, was going to finish. The James Bond movies more or less started the prelim slammer, or at least shaped it into the form we know. It's that totally wackadoo business preceding the actual story, usually cut off from the rest of the film by the title and opening credits. You know—Bond flies into view in a minicopter, kills a whole bunch of mean-looking guys one-two-three with trick weapons, blows up San Francisco for no particular reason, the flames of Nob Hill blend into the film's title projected onto a woman's huge breasts, and we start the movie. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* had a dandy of a prelim slammer with the famous rolling boulder. I treasured it.

But this new one seemed to be going on awfully long for a prelim slammer, and it was still going on. I glanced at my watch, saw that over fifteen minutes had passed, and then I realized what I'd done. *I'd glanced at my watch!* People up there on the screen were in danger of their lives, deadly missiles were flying, fearsome creatures were striking, God only knows what exciting and heart-stopping stuff was taking place up there before me, and I was glancing at my watch!!!

It was right then that I knew, for sure and not for maybe, that something was seriously wrong with *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. The slammer was not going to end because it wasn't a prelim slammer: it was part of the actual movie. It was going to go on and on and not stop until the words *THE END* appeared on the screen—and that's just what happened.

I think the thing that irritated me the most about the film was that there were all these great things that Spielberg had hired talented people to create at vast expense, and they were never used. The film is stuffed with really super things that you just ache to see something done with, for God's sake!

Take those bats, for example.

(continued on page 89)

## Nostalgia

## The Ghost of Cornell Woolrich

by Ron Goulart

Now and then in these pages I've reminisced about the writers who made a strong impression on me in my youth. I've already looked back at Edgar Rice Burroughs and Sax Rohmer, and it occurred to me the other day, while watching a videotape of *The Black Angel*, that no list of my boyhood literary idols would be complete without the name of Cornell Woolrich. In the 1940s his work entertained and unsettled me by way of the movies, radio, and paperbacks. Unlike Burroughs, Rohmer, and other adolescent favorites such as Stanley Weinbaum, A. Merrit, and Henry Kuttner, I actually met Woolrich and got to know him.

By the time I encountered him—in the early 1960s—I was already, more or less, a professional writer. Woolrich wasn't writing much anymore, and you sometimes got the impression he felt he'd already been dead for several years. "I was only trying to cheat death," he wrote in his unfinished autobiography. "I was only trying to surmount for a little while the darkness that all my life I surely knew was going to come rolling in on me one day and obliterate me. I was only trying to stay alive a little brief while longer, after I was already gone. To stay in the light, to be with the living a little while past my time."

Cornell Woolrich had managed to be not one but two of the most successful mystery writers of the 1940s. Under his own name he wrote such darkly-titled novels as *The Bride Wore Black*, *The Black Angel*, and *Rendezvous in Black*. As William Irish he was responsible for the likes of *Phantom Lady*, *Deadline at Dawn*, and *I Married a Dead Man*. Even more impressive, considering how most publishing houses feel about short story collections, is the fact that seven collections of his old pulp stories were published during that decade. All issued under the Irish nom de plume, these included stories like "Nightmare," "Papa Benjamin,"

"Marihuana," "Borrowed Crime," "You Take Ballistics," and the famous "Rear Window." For good measure he was also George Hopley for a while in the 1940s. One of the two novels written under that name was *Night Has a Thousand Eyes*.

I was first exposed to his work in a second-hand way, through movie and radio adaptations of the books and short stories. Although I don't have statistics at hand, it's safe to say Woolrich was one of the forties' most adapted mystery writers. The major studios—Paramount, Universal, Columbia—turned his stuff into films, and so did the lesser outfits such as RKO and Monogram. Fourteen movies based on Woolrich material were released between 1942 and 1949, including *Street of Chance* (1942), starring Burgess Meredith, based on the novel *The Black Curtain*; *The Leopard Man* (1943) directed by Jacques Tourneur, produced by Val Lewton, and based on the novel *Black Alibi*; *Phantom Lady* (1944), directed by Robert Siodmak and produced by Joan Harrison; *Deadline at Dawn* (1946), directed by Broadway's Harold Clurman from a script by, of all people, Clifford Odets; and Paramount's *Fear in the Night* (1947), based on *Nightmare* and featuring a youthful pre-*Star Trek* DeForest Kelley. A couple of Woolrich's short stories were turned into entries in Columbia's *Whistler* series (one of them was directed by William Castle, who went on to shine in the horror genre), and Monogram adapted three others.

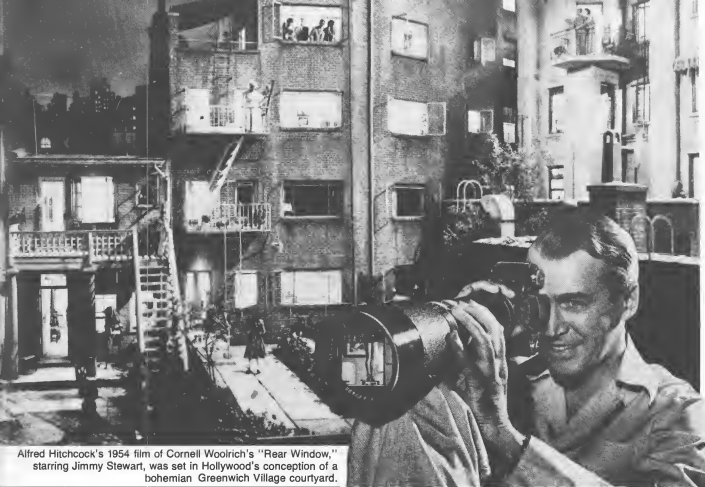
My own favorite of the decade is *Night Has a Thousand Eyes* (1948). Although some critics, especially Woolrich expert Francis M. Nevins, don't much care for the film ("A silly debasement of what may well be Woolrich's greatest novel"), I think it works very well. With the exception of the slightly wooden John Lund as the skeptical boyfriend of the young woman whose death is predicted, the picture is well cast. Edward G. Robinson is excellent as



"Guilt is like a contagious disease..."

the stage magician who discovers he really can foretell the future, and Gail Russell makes an ideal Woolrich heroine. She's pretty, but also quite obviously vulnerable and anxiety-ridden. Even though I've seen the picture a dozen times or more, each time her edgy performance gets me to worrying that she'll end up dead with a lion standing over her, just as prophesized by the forlorn Robinson. The film was directed by John Farrow, one of Hollywood's many underrated talents, and had a screenplay by Barre Lyndon and Jonathan Latimer, who threw out quite a bit of the novel but held on to the feel of Woolrich's chosen milieu, a shadowy nighttime world where the key words are fate, anxiety, and death. And like most of Woolrich's work, the movie doesn't have a completely happy ending.

Radio in the 1940s, as I mentioned in an earlier column, was very different from radio today. Dramatic shows could be heard each and every night, including those that thrilled and chilled you—*Inner Sanctum*, *Escape*, *Lights Out*, and the rest. One of the more subtle creep shows was *Suspense*, which, throughout the decade, featured adaptations of Woolrich stories and novels. In its early years, thanks to wealthy sponsors, the show enjoyed a



Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 film of Cornell Woolrich's "Rear Window," starring Jimmy Stewart, was set in Hollywood's conception of a bohemian Greenwich Village courtyard.

substantial budget and featured such performers as Cary Grant, Joseph Cotten, Maureen O'Hara, Agnes Moorehead, and Fredric March portraying Woolrich's anxious, seemingly doomed characters.

The Woolrich view of the world matched my own adolescent outlook, or at least one of the several outlooks I was affecting at the time: the uneasy, self-centered, self-pitying one. Life, Woolrich's books said, is a dark, scary business; fate is capricious and probably perverse. The simplest acts can produce terrible and momentous consequences. Smoke a little pot, take a subway ride, just walk down the street late at night, and you can end up dead—or wishing you were. Simple acts have a way of building, snowballing, producing a terrible momentum. Existence is unstable and unpredictable. Your closest friend can turn out to be a crazed strangler, the woman you love may disappear suddenly and forever, the house where you know you spent last night may not be there today. Guilt is like a contagious disease, and you can be blamed for all sorts of acts and crimes you didn't commit. You'll get involved in frequent battles with time, the kind you fear you can't win. If Woolrich had had a coat of arms, it surely would have included in its design an hourglass with the sand running out. Deadlines, races

against time are everywhere in his work; the heading for the first chapter of *Phantom Lady*, for example, is "The Hundred and Fiftieth Day Before the Execution."

After becoming acquainted with his work by looking and listening, I decided to start reading it. Since Woolrich's most productive decade coincided with the burgeoning of the paperback, his novels and story collections were readily available in cheap editions. Pocket Books, Avon, Dell, Popular Library, and Mercury Press all offered Woolrich (or Irish) works. The fact, by the way, that Woolrich was also Irish was never much of a secret; I was aware fairly early that he wrote under both names.

His writing won me over immediately. He was almost always audacious, taking chances, playing tricks. Like Raymond Chandler, he was both poetic and hard-boiled; like Ray Bradbury, he often used the language and approaches to be found in serious mainstream fiction. Critics to the contrary, there were many good writers to be found in the pulp magazines of the 1930s and 1940s. Few of them, however, wrote like Woolrich. The stories I was reading in the collections had originally appeared in the pulpwoods of the thirties—*Black Mask*, *Dime Detective*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*. I didn't

know it then, but Woolrich had had a career back in the 1920s as a sort of second-string F. Scott Fitzgerald. His earliest books, which I've never read, had titles like *Cover Charge*, *Children of the Ritz*, and *A Young Man's Heart*. During the Depression, when he couldn't find markets for his Smart Set fiction, he decided to try writing for the pulps. That proved to be a smart move.

Back in the forties, when I read every Woolrich story and novel I could get ahold of, I was completely uncritical. I was under his spell and overlooked the immense holes in his plots and his reliance on wild coincidence. The mixture of poetic images and what he hoped was street-corner vernacular didn't make me wince. Not then.

In 1963, still single, I was living in Manhattan and laying the groundwork of what I anticipated would be a brilliant career as a freelance writer. I made it a point to attend the monthly Mystery Writers of America cocktail parties, which I went to in order to meet girls, editors, or famous writers. On this particular autumn evening, there didn't seem to be any interesting young women or editors in attendance, but I got a hunch that a fellow across the room might be a noted author. He was a gaunt man,

(continued on page 36)

# Letters

## IS NO NUDES GOOD NUDES?

Dear Editor:

What's your hang-up about featuring a photo of a fully dressed busty lady on the cover of TZ? The March/April issue featured a photo of Johnny Weissmuller, as Tarzan, nearly entirely naked. In July/August, you have two photos of Arnold Schwarzenegger and he, too, is nearly entirely naked!

It is mentioned that *Star Trek III* features "more sex." But what sex???

TZ is a great magazine and I wish it continued success. But please cut out the silly editorials. They are utterly needless.

—Richard Sepulveda  
Brooklyn, New York

Gee, nice guy! We expected that we'd get some strange responses to our *Star Trek* issue, but never thought one would come from Brooklyn.

You apparently missed all the sex in *Star Trek III*. As any Trekkie could tell you, the film positively reeks of it! What do you think Lt. Saavik was doing on the *Genesis* planet with that virile young Spock clone? It may have looked to you as if they were merely touching fingers, but anyone familiar with the *T* series knows that in fact they were engaging in foreplay, Vulcan style. —Ed.



FRANK AND ERNEST © by Bob Thaves

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## GOOD LORD, ANOTHER ARK!

Dear Editor:

In your July/August issue, you point out the similarity between your Noah's Ark cartoon and the *New Yorker's* Noah's Ark cartoon, and that they came out in the same week.

Oddly enough, the *Frank and Ernest* strip of July 3's *Saginaw News* features almost exactly the same gag! Quite a coincidence, wouldn't you say? (Maybe these guys are trying to tell us something!)

—Craig Hunter  
Saginaw, Michigan

P.S. After writing this letter, I showed the three cartoons in question to my mother, who says she remembers seeing similar cartoons several years ago. Either the Noah's Ark idea is not original, or these cartoonists are not that creative. Or they're nothing but a bunch of copycats.

## WORSE THAN CENSORSHIP

Dear Editor:

Cable tv (specifically, the Showtime channel) is currently broadcasting the worst and most disastrous remake concept (in my opinion) that has ever been perpetrated on an already completed film: Edward Small's 1962 stop-motion classic, *Jack the Giant Killer*, is being shown in a reedited, revamped musical form.

This is not a newly filmed remake—it is the original movie, with the soundtrack rerecorded in several sections, and several ghastly children's songs in place of the original music score.

There's worse—by reversing and reprinting some shots from the film, and then by dubbing in new voices, characters which originally spoke dialogue now appear to be singing it (!!) the original titles and opening paintings are gone, replaced by garish children's drawings and a horrible theme song. The opening sequence detailing the legend of the wizard Pendragon is cut. The voice-over "dubs" for the characters (in the songs) often don't in the least resemble the voices of the actors in the unaltered sequences. Sometimes, there's not even a voice—poor Don Beddoe as the Bottle Imp has been vocally erased entirely, and redubbed by a wimpish replacement. In all, perhaps fifty percent of the original film remains intact, if that. It is far worse than any kind of censorship I can imagine.

The sequences that suffer most are the finest in the film—those in the castle of Pendragon (Torin Thatcher). Entire scenes are redubbed with bouncy, horrendously upbeat songs on the soundtrack (a ludicrously inappropriate contrast to the visuals). The scene of the Princess Elaine (Judi Meredith) and her transformation into  
(continued on page 79)



Varian Shrivastava

# Year of the Rat Quiz

by Gregory Nicoll

You may think this is 1984, but the Chinese know that in fact it's the Year of the Rat—and in its honor we're presenting this pleasant little quiz, testing your knowledge of the gentle genus *Rattus* in horror and science fiction. Identify both the title of each work and its author. For the nonreaders among you, there's even a special bonus movie question. Answers are on page 88.

1. When I speak of poor Norrrys, they accuse me of a hideous thing, but they must know that I did not do it. They must know it was the rats; the slithering scurrying rats whose scampering will never let me sleep; the daemon rats that race behind the padding of this room and beckon me down to greater horrors than I have ever known; the rats they can never hear; the rats....

2. They seemed to swarm over the place all at once, till the lamplight, shining on their moving dark bodies and glittering, baleful eyes, made the place look like a bank of earth set with fireflies. The dogs dashed on, but at the threshold suddenly stopped and snarled, and then, simultaneously lifting their noses, began to howl in most lugubrious fashion. The rats were multiplying in thousands, and we moved out.... Lord Godalming lifted one of the dogs, and carrying him in, placed him on the floor.

3. Old Masson, the caretaker of one of Salem's oldest and most neglected cemeteries, had a feud with the rats. Generations ago they had come up from the wharves and settled in the graveyard, a colony of abnormally large rats, and when Masson had taken charge after the inexplicable disappearance of the former caretaker, he decided that they must go. At first he set traps for them and put poisoned food by their burrows, and later he tried to shoot them, but it did no good. The rats stayed, multiplying and overrunning the graveyard with their ravenous hordes.

4. There was a sort of brigand's supper in the old bricked kitchen, with the row of dead rats lying in the moonlight against the hen-runs outside, and after thirty minutes or so of rest Cossar roused them all to the labours that were still to do.... they made a pyre for the rat bodies and soaked them in paraffin.... Cossar moved amongst them like a god.

5. "And if you was to walk through the bedrooms now, you'd see the ragged, mouldy bedclothes a-heaving and a-heaving like seas." "And a-heaving and a-heaving with what?" he says. "Why, with the rats under 'em."

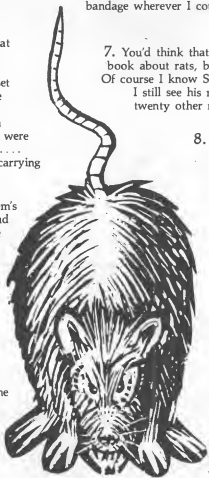
6. For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous—their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. "To what food," I thought, "have they been accustomed in the well?" ... With the particles of the oily and spicy vivand which now remained, I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

7. You'd think that by this time I should be able to write a book about rats, but in fact I know very little about them. Of course I know Socrates very well, and from time to time I still see his mother. Apart from that, there are about twenty other rats which I can recognize as individuals.

8. It was the girl, my girl. Dead. Her eyes stared vacantly into that October vault, into my own eyes. She smelled of stolen kisses. She was naked and she had been ripped open from throat to crotch, her whole body turned into a sterile womb. And yet something lived in there. The rats. I could not see them but I could hear them, rustling around in there, inside her. I knew that in a moment her dry mouth would open and she would speak to me of love.

9. There, peering down at him, was a lone rat holding a discarded plastic knitting needle proudly upright. Fixed to the needle's top was a tiny rectangle of foul, tattered cloth. It took Lester several horrible-seconds to realize he was looking at the flag of the rats.

10. "I have pressed the first lever," said O'Brien. "You understand the construction of this cage. The mask will fit over your head, leaving no exit. When I press this other lever, the door of the cage will slide up. These starving brutes will shoot out of it like bullets. Have you ever seen a rat leap through the air? They will leap onto your face and bore straight into it. Sometimes they attack the eyes first. Sometimes they burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue."



## Bonus Movie Question:

What was the complete name of director Andy Milligan's 1972 grade-Z horror film whose title announced the arrival of two different groups of furry marauders? (Hint: To kill off the first faction, you could call in your neighborhood pest control service. To vanquish the second one, though, you'd need silver bullets.)

Etc.  
Etc.OUR NAME  
IN LIGHTS

In our August issue, we brought you the Twilight Zone Social Club deep in the heart of the Bronx. Now, as if in response, we've been deluged with reports of Twilight Zone night spots, with "TZ" lighting up the evening sky. Here's the coolest-looking of the bunch, an establishment in New Haven, Connecticut, spotted by reader Paul Skonieczny.



## QUOTE

"I do not understand where the 'beauty' and 'harmony' of nature are supposed to be found. Throughout the animal kingdom, animals ruthlessly prey upon each other. Most of them are either cruelly killed by other animals or slowly die of hunger. For my part, I am unable to see any very great beauty or harmony in the tapeworm. Let it not be said that this creature is sent as a punishment for our sins, for it is more prevalent among animals than among humans.

"I suppose what is meant by this 'beauty' and 'harmony' are such things as the beauty of the starry heavens. But one should remember that the stars every now and again explode and reduce everything in their neighborhood to a vague mist."

—Bertrand Russell

TWILIGHT ZONE

RICK DERRINGER

'THINGS TO  
COME' DEPT.

"Can we really suppose that a couple of thousand years from now human beings will still depend upon the messy and graceless business of coupling to produce their children or provide their physical satisfactions? Can we seriously envisage them writhing around in bed as we do, protecting ourselves with dangerous pills or distasteful apparatus against the primitive hazards of the practice? An unnoticeable implant, an untasteful tablet—such will be their means of procreation, and the clumsy indulgences of coitus will have long lost their purpose."

—Jan (formerly James) Morris in the June *Vanity Fair*

## CLASSIC TZ

It was said of a long-ago Zen master that "everywhere he looked, he saw beauty." For others, everywhere they look they see horror. For reader Mark Rathbun of Chico, California, wherever he looks he sees references to "the twilight zone." Here's the opening line of the Foreword to *The Surly Sullen Bell*, Russell Kirk's classic collection of supernatural tales, first published in 1962 (while Serling's tv series was still running):

"More of the outer darkness than of the twilight zone, these are tales unabashedly Gothick. In them the reader may find hints of M.R. James, Henry James, and even Jesse James."

Interestingly, one of the tales in the collection, "Sorworth Place," was later adapted for *Night Gallery*.



Frank Cottam

**Etc.  
Etc.**



## UNDERGROUND MAGAZINE

We never thought we'd sink so low as to run a photo like this, but here it is: miner Gary J. Thomas of Knoxville displaying a deep interest in *Twilight Zone* 1500 feet down in a Tennessee tin mine.

## SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED

"SFWA members vote secretly and in private in a careful evaluation of who their friends are."

—Toastmaster Terry Carr, at this year's Nebula Awards ceremony sponsored by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

## BE A GHOSTBUSTER

Declaring "We ain't afraid of no ghosts!", two inventive souls out in Pennsylvania, Mark Lister and Jim Garvey, have started a *Ghostbusters* fan club. \$8.95 gets you a Certificate of Anti-Paranormal Proficiency (that's what it says), a *Ghostbusters* ID card complete with fee schedule and ghost insurance info, a jacket patch, a subscription to the club magazine, and several other goodies. Write to *Ghostbusters*, Box 8278, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.



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## BULLISH ON BEARS

As this issue's quiz proclaims, 1984 is the Year of the Rat. As for '85, it's "the Year of the Teddy Bear"—or so say Ron Leming and Annette S. Crouch, who are editing a collection of science fiction, fantasy, and horror tales about these critters, to be entitled *The Bear Essential*. "We want stories that show bears as major characters, central to the essential plot, so that, without the Teddy Bears, the story collapses," they informed us. "We want quality stories—not just stories with Teddy Bears added. We want to celebrate the Teddy Bear and the many contributions it has made to the world and our lives—its heroism, its love and devotion, its acceptance of us without judgment, its essential being. But above all, we want to present the Teddy Bear in all its glory, as humankind's best friend." These people sound serious! If you've got a story for them, send it to Box 5099, Lancaster, California 93539. Maximum length, 13,000 words; deadline, February '85.

## CAMERAS



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## TZ PROFILE

# Vincent Price: 'Raven' Maven

The bloodthirsty villain of the Poe films now prefers French cooking and Oscar Wilde.

Interviewer Lorenzo Carcaterra reports:

He is the renaissance man of horror. In a career which first saw him grace an American stage in 1935 alongside Helen Hayes in *Victoria Regina*, Vincent Price has managed to play virtually every possible role, whether in front of a camera, beneath the blinding lights of a stage, or behind a lecturn looking out at thousands of quizzical faces. Yet despite his long list of impressive credits, despite strong performances opposite Charles Laughton in *Don Juan in Hell*, George Sanders in *The House of Seven Gables*, and Gregory Peck in *The Keys of the Kingdom*, Vincent Price will forever be remembered as a man of evil.

Beginning in the early 1960s, Price became the screen's leading personification of death and menace—and its most celebrated interpreter of that genius of horror, Edgar Allan Poe. Working under the low-budget banner of Roger Corman, Price appeared in one Poe classic after another (many of them adapted by Richard Matheson) until his name became nearly synonymous with Poe's, turning the author of "Ligela" into the drive-in circuit's favorite writer. Because of this body of work and such classics as the *House of Wax*, supplemented by a handful of grade-B wonders (*The House on Haunted Hill*, *Theater of Blood*, the Abominable Dr. Phibes), Price soon reigned as the King of the Macabre.

Today, at seventy-three, this erstwhile monster sits serenely each week in a spacious reading room and serves as host of the popular PBS series *Mystery* (which begins a fresh season in October). He talks to us in the smooth, richly cultured voice we have come to recognize after Price's 110 films, a thousand appearances on *Hollywood Squares*, dozens of recorded readings (including his recent narration on Michael Jackson's *Thriller*), and an endless stream of television stints. He handles

the chores in a relaxed, easy manner, befitting the Yale man he once was. Occasionally he'll sip from a cup of warm tea. Not once does he expose a trace of evil in either his voice or his manner.

But then, those truly expert in the ways of the Evil One never do let on.

**TZ:** Do you resent being called a horror film actor?

**Price:** In a way I do, yes. First of all, I don't think it's true. I've done 110 films, and only twenty of those have been horror films. The problem is, the horror films have been the ones that have lasted, the ones that have been remembered by filmgoers and film students. I'm sure if they had all been forgotten, I would have been forgotten.

**TZ:** Why do you think they've remained so popular all these years?

**Price:** Because they were made with a sense of humor, which many of the films today lack. Take *The Raven*, for example. There's no plot to that story—it is, after all, a poem about a bird. By making it funny, you make it enjoyable.

**TZ:** What else do you think they had going for them that today's movies lack?

**Price:** They weren't depressing. People have always gone to movies to be entertained, not to be lectured. Also, they were based on stories written by Edgar Allan Poe, a man who, I believe, is the most important of American writers.

**TZ:** Any particular favorite from among the Poe series?

**Price:** If forced to name one, I guess I would choose *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Everything seemed to come together in that one.

**TZ:** You haven't made a film in quite some time. Any reason for that?

**Price:** It's very simple. Most of the scripts I'm offered are basically repeats of the work I've done in the past, and



I refuse to do that anymore—and thankfully, I don't have to. Due to my heavy lecture commitments and my and my one-man show on Oscar Wilde, I'm as busy now as I've ever been in my life. I'm not saying that if a good script comes along, I won't do it. Of course I would. I just haven't any hopes of ever seeing a good script again.

**TZ:** How often have you been lecturing?

**Price:** This year alone I will have spoken at well over four hundred colleges on subjects running the gamut from movies and villainy to art and poetry. It's gotten to the point where I can pretty much put together a lecture on anything.

**TZ:** You've also authored two very successful cookbooks. Are you planning a third?

**Price:** I'll probably get around to another sooner or later. The first two still seem to generate a great deal of mail, especially *A Treasury of Great Recipes*. Interestingly, most of the letters come from men. Men have always loved the art of cooking. What they hate is the art of admitting their love. Women, I have discovered in my travels, really hate to cook and will do anything not to have to do it.

**TZ:** Most readers of mystery novels also tend to be women. Why do you think that is?

**Price:** Because they're smarter than men. Always have been. Why be cooped up in a kitchen, when you can be curled up with a good mystery?

**TZ:** Are you a mystery buff?

**Price:** Not as much as I would like to be. I do enjoy P.D. James. I think she's wonderful. And of course, not to always go back to him, but I love reading Poe, who, you know, wrote the very first detective story with *The Gold Bug*.

**TZ:** What do you do for enjoyment?

**Price:** I read books on art—I'm fascinated by the subject. I travel—anywhere, anytime I can. That's pretty much it, even though I'm sure your readers would somehow be inclined to think otherwise.

**TZ:** What would they think?

**Price:** They probably feel I spend my nights in a dark, dank castle torturing some poor, innocent young woman.

**TZ:** Do you?

**Price:** There is no such thing as a poor, innocent young woman. Besides, I prefer my castles to be well lit.

## TZ PROFILE

### Marc Singer: Earth's Secret Weapon

**Humanity's best hope against the cold-blooded aliens in V is himself a very cool customer.**

Interviewer James Verniere reports:

It's no surprise that actor Marc Singer was such a hit in the television movie *V* and its sequel, *V: The Final Battle*. We all felt confident that this strapping, blond, all-American hero had what it took to keep the earth safe for earthlings. For the uninformed, the *V* saga charted the struggle of a group of human resistance fighters, led by Singer and costar Faye Grant, to rid the world of the Visitors, nasty reptilian invaders from space who, in sheer charm, resemble a cross between Nazis and vipers. Originally conceived and written by Kenneth Johnson, *V* and *V: The Final Battle* were a combination of old-fashioned action sf, allegory, and revolutionary rhetoric that also culled ideas and images from classics of the genre (including more than a little from the *Twilight Zone* episode "To Serve Man"). It was a ratings blockbuster, luring 65 million viewers in its first outing and 50 million in its second, clobbering the competition (which included the miniseries, *The Last Days of Pompeii*),



"If you think back reeall hard, you'll recall that I told you to 'Get your mind out of the gutter'—not 'Get me a mind out of the gutter.'"



and spawning a series that will air on NBC this fall.

The result for Singer is that he is—as they say in the industry—hot. But Singer has been around for some time, and his extensive training and experience belie his leading-man good looks and his sinewy physique (his publicist playfully refers to him as "the best body in Hollywood").

Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, the son of symphony conductor Jacques Singer and pianist Leslie Singer, Marc decided early on, in spite of his parents' disapproval, to pursue a career in acting. After graduating from the University of Seattle, he was selected to join the Seattle Repertory Theatre, the San Diego National Shakespeare Festival, and the American Conservatory Theatre, where he played everything from Lear to Shylock to Petruchio.

Fans of genre films will remember Singer as the non-sensense hero of Don Coscarelli's sword and sorcery film, *The Beastmaster*. But he also made his mark in films like *If You Could See What I Hear* and the underrated Vietnam war drama, *Go Tell It to the Spartans*. Currently at work on the *V* series, Singer lives with his actress/wife Haunani Mn in Laurel Canyon. A fan of science fiction films and literature, he names *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *War of the Worlds* as two personal favorites. He's not sure if *V* will stand the test of time as well as those works, but he's having a hell of a lot of fun working on it.

**TZ:** Were you surprised by the success of *V*?

**Singer:** Very surprised, in part because the first six-hour film was such an amorphous thing in the making. You often don't have any idea what something you're involved in is going to be like in the end. But I think we suspected we had something good.

**TZ:** In retrospect, what elements contributed to *V*'s success?

**Singer:** The action adventure elements, mostly. But I also think the series offered people something besides vague political rhetoric as a reason to fight a war. Here we are invaded by aliens! The course was clear. People were united against a common enemy.

**TZ:** Although its success was limited, *Beastmaster* has attained a kind of cult status. Will there be a sequel?

**Singer:** Not that I know of, which surprises me a bit, because I thought it was such a fun project, and it was successful—despite a few technical problems, including the times the eagle, which was supposed to be my ally, attacked me, and the time the tiger sank its fangs into the tire of an expensive piece of equipment.

**TZ:** Do you think the American television audience has a hunger for science fiction and fantasy which is not being satisfied by current fare?

**Singer:** I think so. I think the success of series like *Twilight Zone* and *Star Trek* and *Outer Limits* proved this in the past, and I hope the success of *V* will prove it in the fall. There's a reason, too. You see, with fantasy it's possible to deal with themes you cannot readily approach in other forms. *V* is at once science fiction and something else. It's full of ideas, and it gives people some kind of future to dream about.

**TZ:** It's also a political allegory.

**Singer:** That's what I mean about the something else—the something that's just beneath the surface of fantasy and science fiction.

**TZ:** You're a trained actor who's performed Shakespeare. Does that training make popular entertainment a—pardon the expression—trivial pursuit?

**Singer:** No, not at all. Shakespeare helps an actor discover the key to unlock other characters.

**TZ:** Are you a science fiction reader?

**Singer:** I'm an eclectic reader, and science fiction is something that I occasionally read.

**TZ:** What's your position on UFOs?

**Singer:** I believe they exist. I believe there is more in heaven and Earth than is dreamt of in our philosophy.

**TZ:** What kinds of letters have you received in response to *V*?

**Singer:** Buckets and buckets. The reaction has been incredible.

**TZ:** Any weird ones? Anything, say, postmarked Alpha Centauri?

**Singer:** I never thought to look, but I will now. That's a crazy thought. **17**

# PUMPKIN

by Robert Bloch

*A ghoulish little tale in the grand old Halloween tradition.*



Illustrations by George Craden

Wight came early in the country. The sun disappeared into the woods and shadows started slinking out from between the trees. Twilight brought a chill wind whipping across fallen leaves and in the distance the huddling hills were hidden in autumn haze.

That's when David began moving through the farmhouse, locking the doors and windows.

It was a regular ritual now, but tonight Vera rebelled.

"For heaven's sake, must you close things up so early? We'll suffocate in here without fresh air."

David didn't answer. Instead he opened the kitchen cabinet, pulled out the vodka bottle, and poured himself a shot.

"Please, David," she said. "couldn't you wait until after dinner? I'll have it on the table just as soon as Billy shows up."

David was staring out the window, squinting at

the woods across the road, but now he turned and his eyes widened.

"I thought he was in his room," he said. "How often do I have to tell you I don't want that kid outside when it gets dark?"

"But he's just across the way—"

David turned so quickly that Vera got only a momentary glimpse of his face, but what she saw frightened her because he looked so frightened. And now he was hurrying to the door, flinging it open, rushing out.

As Vera moved to the window she could see him running across the road and into the tangled, weed-choked remnants of the vegetable garden, beside the old Holloway place. Then he was swallowed up in the dusk and Helen lost sight of him.

*I lost sight of him a long time ago, she told herself. Ever since we moved here to the farmhouse.*



Perhaps it started even earlier than that, back in town, when David was terminated just before Easter.

"Terminated, hell!" he'd raged. "Bastards fired me, that's what they did. Ten years working my butt off for the company and now they're giving my job to a lousy computer!"

"It's not the end of the world," Vera said. "There must be other openings for controllers and you know a lot of people in the business. The thing to do is start making some calls, get out a résumé."

So David called around and circulated his résumé. He had several promising interviews, a few nibbles, and no firm offers. By Labor Day they'd run through his severance pay, and it was then that Vera suggested moving to the farm.

"You're out of your mind," he said. "I'm an accountant, not a manure-spreader."

"No one expects you to work the place, darling.

But it's only forty minutes from town on the turnpike and if you get a job—"

"If? I'll land something, just be patient."

"I am patient," Vera told him. "But we're already digging into our savings. And here you have a perfectly good piece of property your uncle left you, standing idle all these years, where we can live rent-free."

"That's crazy," David said. "The whole place is rundown—cost a fortune just to fix it up halfway decently."

Vera shook her head. "We've got our furniture and the appliances. Maybe we'll have to spend some money on minor repairs, but the house is sound. I'm sure we can manage on far less than we're paying here. Besides, it'll be good for Billy, living in the country. And it will be good for you too, getting away from this rat race."

"I don't want to go there," David told her. "And that's final."

Only it wasn't final. Vera went right ahead on her own and made all the arrangements. Their lease on the apartment was up at the end of the month and by then she'd got the painters and carpenter and the electrical contractor working against the deadline. Just as she thought, it was no big deal.

The big deal turned out to be persuading David to make the move. But she kept after him, and when it came to facing the hike in the new leasing agreement he finally saw the light.

They'd moved in at the beginning of October, and even David had to admit she'd done a wonderful job transforming the old farmhouse into a comfortable home. Billy lost a few weeks of school but for an eight-year-old it wasn't important, and he liked his new surroundings—ten full acres to run wild in, plus the woods behind the abandoned Holloway place across the road.

But right from the start David put his foot down. He didn't want Billy playing anywhere near the deserted farmhouse with its caved-in roof, and served notice that the woods were strictly off-limits; in fact, he wasn't permitted to cross the road at all.

Vera could understand about the farmhouse because it was boarded-up, and there was no telling if the structure was safe. What she couldn't understand was why Billy couldn't play in the yard or the wooded area beyond.

"Private property," David said. "No trespassing. Folks out here are funny about such things."

Vera tried to reason with him. "There's nobody living within a mile of this place. And Billy isn't going to harm anything."

"That's not the point. I don't want anything to harm Billy."

# PUMPKIN

"What do you mean?"

David didn't answer her. But it was then she began to notice the way he acted every night as darkness came, locking everything up. Vera believed in taking precautions—after all, you never know who might be driving around nowadays, looking for a place to break into—but he started so early, even before twilight, and if he found anything left open by accident he blew his stack.

But it was the drinking that bothered her the most. Back in town they usually had a cocktail before dinner to help him unwind when he came home from work. Now there was no work and he wasn't sharing a martini with her; he was drinking straight vodka and going through as much as half a bottle a night. He'd gotten into the habit of sleeping all morning and watching television all afternoon. Funny, he'd always hated soap operas before. Maybe he still did because he never commented on them, just sat staring at the tube with a sort of glazed look in his eyes. But when Billy came home on the school bus, David turned off the set and the glazed look disappeared. He watched the youngster like a hawk if he went out to play, and chewed Vera out for not doing the same.

*It's David I should have been looking at, not Billy.* Vera frowned, peering through the window. *Where did I lose him?*

She found him now, moving forth from the deep shadows across the road and pulling Billy along by the collar. As they neared the house she could hear the muffled sound of sobbing.

Now David's voice rose as Vera opened the door. "I warned you, remember? Why didn't you keep away from there like you were told?"

Billy raised a tear-stained face. "Honest, I was only—"

"Never mind the excuses! I give the orders here and don't you forget it. I want you to march upstairs to your room and go straight to bed."

"But Dad—"

"You heard me. Now get going!"

Shoulders shaking with suppressed sobs, Billy made his way up the staircase as his parents stood watching in the hall, avoiding each other's gaze. The sound of his footsteps faded and they heard the bedroom door closing in the hall above.

Vera turned, speaking softly. "Really, David, must you? The poor kid hasn't even had his dinner."

"It won't hurt him to miss a meal. And he's got to learn to obey the rules. I don't want him going over there."

Vera took a deep breath. "You keep saying that, but you never give any reasons. Just as long as he keeps away from the house I don't see—"

"You don't see anything," David said. "Come on, let's eat. I'm starving."

But when she served dinner David didn't seem hungry. He scarcely touched his food; instead he got

up and poured himself another drink, bringing the bottle back to the table with him.

"Want some coffee?" she said.

"No, I'm okay." He gulped the drink, then refilled his glass.

Vera took another deep breath. "You're not okay."

David shrugged. "Have it your own way. I've got no job and no prospects. Winter's coming, we're stuck out here in the middle of nowhere, and God knows what happens next year when we run out of savings. Is it any wonder I'm uptight?"

"That part I can understand. But since we came here you act as if you were afraid of something—"

"Afraid? You're imagining things."

"I think you're the one who's imagining. That look you had when I said Billy was across the road tonight. And other times, when you just stare out the window."

David scowled. "I told you I never wanted to live here in the first place. It gives me the creeps."

"What does?"

He lowered his glass. It was empty, and so was the expression in his eyes. "All right. I didn't want to say anything but it's probably better than letting you think I don't have both oars in the water." He sighed and leaned back. "If you must know, this isn't the first time I've come to live here."

"David—you never told me that—"

"I never told anyone. But a long time ago, when my mother took sick after the divorce, I spent a summer and part of the fall with my aunt and uncle in this house. I was just about Billy's age then. So you see, I know."

"Know what?"

"About the place across the road. The first thing Uncle George did was warn me never to go over there, because the old man didn't like strangers."

"Who was he talking about?"

"Jed Holloway. He lived on the property all alone, ever since anyone around here could remember. Uncle George moved in here right after he and Aunt Louise were married, but he said that even then Jed Holloway was an old man. God only knows how long he'd been there or what he did to keep going. Maybe he raised enough food from his vegetable garden, because nobody ever saw him at the stores in town. Folks said he had a wife once, and after she died he never left the place, just boarded up all the windows like they are today. If the salesmen or anybody else showed up he'd run them off the property with a shotgun."

"Didn't anyone ever do anything about it?"

David shrugged. "Like what? It was his place. If he wanted to cut off the water and electricity that was his own affair. He had an old well and an out-house in back, and he must have used candles in the house because some nights you could see lights flickering from cracks between the boards on the

windows. It wasn't as if he was breaking any law—just an old coot who went off his rocker when he lost his wife. Maybe he lost a kid too, because she was supposed to have died in childbirth. That would explain why he hated children so much.

"I know he hated me. Playing in the yard here, sometimes I saw him puttering around in his garden, mumbling to himself. I'd never seen anyone talking to empty air before and it scared me. The way he looked was pretty scary, too—tall and skinny, with long white hair down to his shoulders and a beard that hid all of his face except the eyes. That was the worst, those eyes of his, glaring at me when he noticed I was playing outside. I'll never forget it, him standing there dressed in rags like some kind of scarecrow come to life, a scarecrow with little red-rimmed eyes staring—"

David broke off and reached for the bottle again.

"So that's why you didn't want to come here again," Vera said.

David finished pouring and raised his glass. "There are other reasons. Oh, I never believed those stories floating around about Holloway getting into magic and practicing witchcraft. That stuff about his putting curses on people and making spells to wither their crops and kill off cattle sounded pretty wild even then, and nobody ever proved anything. I probably would have gotten used to how he looked and acted if it hadn't been for Halloween."

David drank, then sat back. From the hall beyond, the ticking of the grandfather's clock echoed through the silence.

Vera leaned forward. "Aren't you going to tell me what happened?"

"Jed Holloway left the house," David said. "That's what happened. Two other kids and myself, we were playing out by the barn after supper and we saw him come out and start walking into the woods behind his house. He was carrying an armful of candles and something that looked like a big book—black, with metal bands around it.

"These kids I was playing with, Tom and Terry, were older than me, and I guess they'd heard all those stories. Tom told us Holloway was going down into the woods to pray to the Devil. That's what witches and wizards did on Halloween, they prayed to the Devil and conjured up ghosts and demons.

"Terry didn't buy that. He said there were no such things as witches or ghosts and Jed Holloway was crazy as a bedbug. The way he acted, chasing kids and yelling at them and all, maybe it was time to teach him a lesson. So later that night, after dark, we did it."

"What did you do?"

"We tipped over Jed Holloway's outhouse."

Vera started to laugh, but David's face was grim.

**"That stuff about  
his putting curses  
on people  
and making spells  
to wither  
their crops  
and kill off cattle  
sounded pretty wild  
even then."**

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"You think it's funny?"

"Of course it is."

David nodded. "So did we, at first. I remember the way we kept giggling when we sneaked across the road. It was a moonless night, everything dark and still. Not quite everything, because far away through the trees we could see little glimmers of light. Tom said Jed Holloway must be off in the woods down there lighting his candles, and sure enough we did hear a voice that sounded like someone saying a prayer, very solemn and deep.

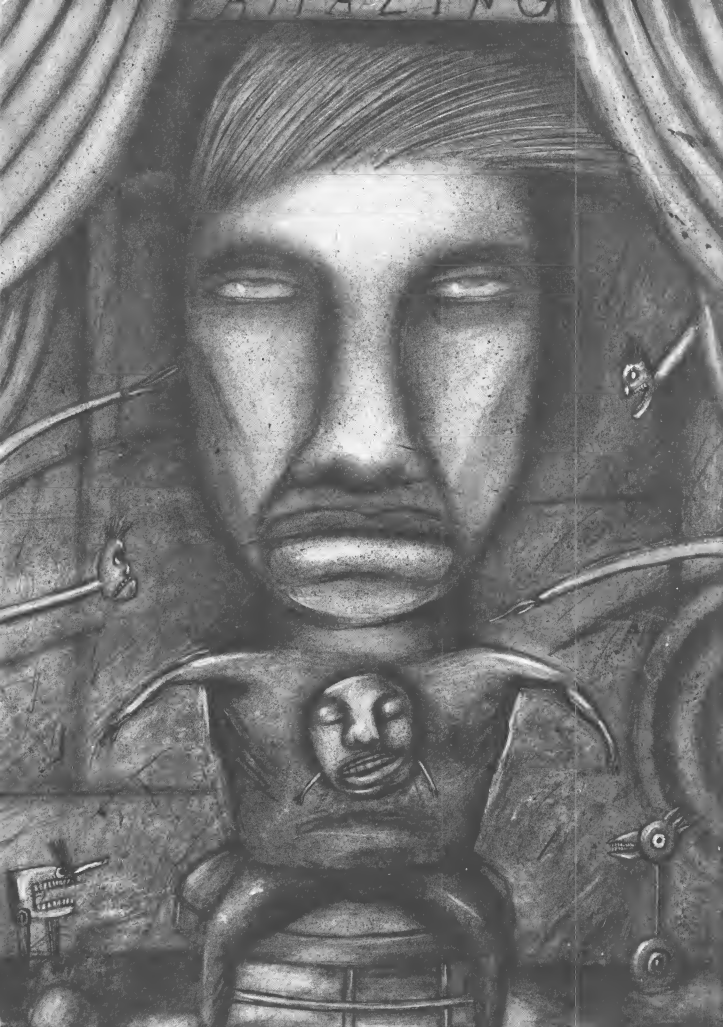
"That sobered us a little, that and the way the shadows seemed to move in the darkness around the outhouse up ahead. Then we set to work and forgot about being scared. The outhouse was old and rickety and quite small, but prying it loose from the foundation with a shovel was a big job for kids our age. And when we did, the next problem was how to tip it over without making a racket.

"Only noise wasn't that much of a problem after all, because all at once a cold wind began to whistle through the trees. It seemed to come from somewhere back in the woods and Terry said we were in for a storm. Sure enough, the sky was pitch-black overhead and we could hear thunder growling off in the hills.

"But we didn't mind, since it drowned out the creaking when we started to lift the outhouse and tilt it over on its side. Then, just as we got ready to ease it down, lightning turned everything green and there was a clap of thunder so close and loud it almost deafened us."

"One thing for sure, it scared the hell out of Tom and Terry. They let go of their hold and took off for the road, leaving me standing there trying to balance the damned thing all by myself. I guess I

(continued on page 68)



# KUSH

by Michael Blaine

*His claim to fame—and the bane of his existence—  
was the brother who lived in his body.*

Kush knew the operation might kill him, but he could no longer stand his existence. A medical anomaly, he had been born with another child in his chest, a condition doctors refer to as an autosite-parasite. The skull, the shape of the face, even individual features were visible through the taut skin between his nipples. It was the source of his fame as well as his agony, and now he had convinced a team of doctors—despite their dire misgivings—to free him from the homunculus.

He couldn't even stand his successes anymore. His agent had recently gotten him appearances on both Phil Donohue and Merv Griffin, and the response had been tremendous. Sales of his life story, *The Me Inside Me*, had gone through the roof after the Griffin show, on which the host had done a soft shoe with Kush while beating a gentle tattoo on the head of his guest's shapely fetus.

"The close-ups looked terrific," his booking agent, Selma, a child-sized woman in a spinning office chair, crowed from behind her desk. "Very tasteful, too, Kush."

He had tried to smile under the blazing lights.

"Let's bring the camera up close, this is really phenomenal, ladies and gentlemen, one of the wonders of our age really, that's it, you can see the shape of the face, you see the nose and the eyes. They're closed, aren't they, Mr. Kush?"

Running his fingers over the baby's skull, Kush assured Merv that they had never opened. "Except maybe when I was asleep, Merv."

That brought a howl from the audience.

"You can see the entire form, it's like a living piece of sculpture, isn't that terrific, folks?"

After an encore, Kush closed the flap in his specially designed shirt and buttoned it up over the painful growth above his breastbone. Merv obligingly held up a copy of the book, and after the taping Kush was led through the live audience by a perfectly tanned, Italian-suited factotum who kept saying, "Hands off, ladies, hands off."

For Kush, the words contained a bitter irony.

At thirty he was still a virgin. He had never been able to disrobe in front of a woman, not so much out of shyness over his deformity, but rather because he feared female hands straying over the wonderfully soft child-head—the skin covering it had the rich texture of suede—and feared he would become second in his imaginary lover's affections.

Phil Donohue was far more sensitive than Merv Griffin. He discussed the history of the sideshow and the historic moment that Barnum's "freaks" demanded he refer to them as "prodigies."

"Prodigies of all sorts are demanding their rights today. The Little People of America, for instance, have fought an arduous battle against the term 'mid-get,' the obese are no longer displayed as objects of derision, so-called bearded ladies are now recognized as having hormonal problems that can be modified. But most of all, we now realize the essential humanity of prodigies, and how, in their startling differences from us, they confirm our own humanity."

The audience stood and applauded Phil's sentiments.

This experience was somewhat marred, unfortunately, when after the show a coproducer offered Kush a gram of cocaine and then asked if he could "cop a feel." Kush, who stood six-three and weighed over two hundred, picked the man up and heaved him into the hallway.

The doctors showed Kush elaborate CAT scans, demonstrating how intricately entangled the homunculus was with vital organs, particularly his lungs and chest. The small vestigial hands lay, as rendered in the pictures, like skeletal paws over his lungs. His breastbone curved inward under the weight of the head, a malformation that had occurred when he was growing and his bones were still soft. The curled legs floated, shriveled, just above his kidneys.

"We have had more success separating the so-called Siamese twins than autosite-parasites. The dangers of this operation are tremendous, particularly from uncontrollable hemorrhages. There are so many major blood vessels involved here, Mr. Kush."



# KUSH

"I'll sign anything you want, absolving you of any responsibility. I can't stand all that writhing around in there."

The doctors looked at each other. "It's highly unlikely the homunculus is moving, Mr. Kush. In all of our examinations we haven't noted a trace of movement."

"It kicks at night. When we're alone. It mumbles. It squeezes my heart. If you had any conception of the pain, you'd stop making all these stupid objections." Kush half rose from his chair in the consulting room, clutching the steel armrests. "Cut it out, please. Cut!"

An appointment was set for the end of March, but meanwhile Kush could barely sleep. The moment he rested his head on his pillow, the infant began its guttural moaning, at times grabbing onto his rib cage as if it were the bars of its cell. It stretched and stiffened inside him, driving its head halfway into his throat, almost choking him. He tried to lie still, but that only seemed to enrage the creature. White bolts of pain shot up his spine at the peak of its tantrums. It was biting him with its nascent teeth through the hard sheath of bone around his spinal cord. It was murdering him from within.

In the morning he was drenched, sour fluids burning the back of his throat. Fragments of nightmare clung to his consciousness, dreams of the forthcoming operation. They had accidentally operated on his brain and found quintuplets, still-born, imbedded in his cerebral cortex. They had sliced his stomach open, only to discover nests of snakes with human faces. And in one memorable vision, the homunculus had leaped out of his chest whole, bitten his neck, and killed him on the operating table. He woke up the moment after his own death.

If only he had some human companionship, a woman whom he could talk to, sleep with, tell his secret fears to. Why had it been so hard for him to have a love affair, even a fleeting one? He was constantly reading about unusual matings in the papers, particularly the *New York Post*. A recent one had proclaimed, **TRANSEXUAL WRITER TO WED MURDERER OF THREE**.

Kush couldn't help feeling he was more appealing than a triple murderer, however good-looking.

It wasn't easy to go ahead with the operation. The homunculus was a part of him, and there had been a time when he loved it. Stroking its cheeks had soothed him, sending waves of pleasure through his stomach; it would hum and coo under his hand. Its small palms would press back through the thin curtain of epidermis; its mouth would blow warm air through his chest cavity. As a child he had slept embracing its head and rocking, and he was never alone.

He wondered if it could divine his intentions.

Once he had made the decision to destroy it, he was sure it had gotten more maddening in its behavior. There was a deeper question, too. If it was capable of rage, didn't it have a soul? Kush, a lapsed Catholic, thought of going to confession in some out-of-the-way church, but he was afraid the priest would refuse to absolve him, or worse still, ask for a ruling from Rome.

Then, just as he was most determined to have the fetus ripped out of him, he would hear it whimpering quietly, and he would remember the secret summer days when he had gone to the beach or the park and lain in the sun, his shirt open, and they had slept peacefully together, their hearts beating in time.

He called an all-night talk show in order to describe what he was going through, but froze at the last minute. Selma always said, "Keep your troubles to yourself. Make happy-happy. Tell them you feel special and privileged, even if you feel like a pile of abandoned dog shit."

After delivering this piece of wisdom she spun around in her chair and stretched her painted mouth to the breaking point.

One night the nightmare lasted until dawn. Kush was pressed flat on his back in his bed, assailed by violent muscular contractions. His throat closed, opened, closed again, like a valve about to burst. He couldn't breathe. He dreamed his face was splattered with blood. He dreamed he was spitting out all of his teeth. He dreamed he was a snake swallowing an entire hog, then remembered he had seen this phenomenon in an educational documentary. Struggling to wake up, he was flung back by one wave of tremors after another. He started coughing, as if there were a clot of phlegm he had to discharge. It wouldn't come loose.

Then he felt the corners of his mouth tear.

He slept so long he lost track of time. The room brightened briefly, but was soon layered in blue shadows. Kush felt serene, light as smoke. He dozed, breathing freely, deep drafts of air that filled every cavity of his starved body. He wondered why he had never breathed so deeply before. Falling asleep, he dreamed he was an ordinary accountant. It was an ecstatic dream. In it he wore a tailored suit and carried a calculating machine. A receptionist offered him some Harvey's Bristol Cream.

The moaning suddenly pierced his reverie. How long had he been unconscious? Judging by his weakness and his ravenous hunger, he must have lain there for days. Sitting up, he touched his encrusted face. There was a dull ache in his esophagus. His spine had moved into an unaccustomed position:

The whining went on, a single ceaseless note. Kush stood, swaying in the center of the room, trying to locate the source of the grating sound. Finally he decided it was in a corner, behind his bureau. Shuffling over, he felt vaguely apprehensive, a fear

## A form slithered along the wall, hissing his name. Clearly the small creature was human.

he tried to squelch. The noise was familiar. It was a cat, a cat in heat. The fact that he didn't own a cat didn't bother him. It had slipped into the room, somehow entered the house from the alley where a horde of the animals was always wailing.

When he began shifting the large chest of drawers to get at it, a form skittered along the wall, hissing his name. *Kushhhhhh. Kushhhhhh.* Clearly the small creature was human—it had legs and a drooping, hairless head—but it was no more than two feet high, and, although quick, it dragged itself across the floor in an uncoordinated way.

"Come here. Who are you?" he asked, still dreamy from his ordeal. "What are you?"

*"Kusssshhhhhh. Kusssshhhhhh."*

He edged closer to it, balling up his fists. But it was hard to concentrate, he was so intensely hungry. The two urges competed: to grab the little animal and to find something to stuff down his gullet. Then he saw it clamber up a steam pipe and hang there, clawing, spitting, hissing.

"Calm down, what's the matter, I won't hurt you." He could think of nothing but killing the creature, strangling it, but he spoke softly and seductively. Closer. Closer. He reached for it, but it leaped from the pipe onto his shoulders and began scratching him, shrieking in terror like a spider monkey, its small fingers tearing at his hair. He spun wildly, beating at it over his shoulder until he threw it off and it hit the floor with the thwack of dead meat.

The lump on the floor did not move. He stamped his feet, but it was still. Even then he didn't trust it; he groped for the switch. In the burst of light the fetus lay, mostly teeth and hair and bone, face up, a malformed copy of his own features.

He fled into the living room, where his Betamax was quietly taping a Joe E. Brown movie, the comic's grin engulfing his face. He realized it was three in the morning, maybe even later, because the Joe E. Brown Festival was running at that time all week. Brown kept smiling and smiling, his features slowly disappearing into a black hole in the center of his face.

Then the hunger returned. Kush pushed through the swinging doors into the kitchen and emptied all the contents of his refrigerator into his microwave oven: frozen waffles, fish sticks, two He-Man dinners. Slowly, as the terrible appetite abated, he began to grow calmer. Wiping up some extra gravy

with a wad of Wonder Bread, he tried to convince himself he had experienced the worst of all his nightmares.

But when he tiptoed back into his bedroom the battered homunculus lay there like a fleshy doll, its face buried against the spokes of the radiator. The big man edged closer, leaned forward, and rolled his old friend over. Kush had always been a gentle man—perhaps too gentle—and when he saw what he had done, he froze. There was no way around it. He was a murderer. He had to give himself up.

But when the detectives arrived, they refused to arrest him. "You can't do time for this. There's no statute."

Kush tried his best to convince them, but the one called Barkus was adamant. "Listen, buddy. In this country it's legal for people to mutilate themselves. It's in the constitution. Freedom of expression."

After that remark, Kush showed them the door. Carefully he wrapped the homunculus in a sheet and placed it on the Barcalounger. He turned off the videocassette recorder and sat up until dawn, alternately dazed and distraught. He was alone for the first time in his life, hollowed out and light as helium. At times he was swept with remorse. Then the tide would shift and he was flooded with relief. Finally he called Selma.

"Kushie, fix yourself up and I'll send a photographer over. I know an excellent funeral home; they'll make him look like he's alive, believe me. Don't worry, sweetie, I know how you feel. I'll get the wreaths together. We'll hire a limo."

"No," Kush said.

"I understand how you're feeling now, but don't blame yourself. You were an angel for all these years. You've got to let yourself grieve. A wake will make you feel better. And let's face it, I know I have to be the heavy here, but this could be the end of your career. This could be your last payday, Kushie."

Kush saw the shiny white coffin; he saw the wreaths, big enough to drape over Seabiscuit, hanging on the wall. He saw the mass cards and the faces of his show-biz friends drifting through a deep-carpeted room. He saw the headlines.

"No," Kush said. "I'll take care of it myself, Selma."

The next day he had it cremated.

A faint melancholy clung to him for months, and at times he felt like an amputee who senses the pulse of an absent limb; he was certain the homunculus was hugging his heart. But by the spring his chest had healed, and the visions had begun to fade.

And one night Kush found himself gliding across the floor at Roseland in the arms of a woman not quite his age. As they whirled, she pressed her face against Kush's chest, against the tender scar, and he began telling her the story of his life. **17**

# Nostalgia

(continued from page 17)

about sixty, sandy-haired, wearing a double-breasted tan suit and two-tone shoes. He looked like a ghost from the 1940s, a sad loser out of one of Woolrich's own nightmare stories, sitting by himself, quiet and resigned. I asked a middle-aged lady near me who he was. This was the lady's first MWA party; her husband had recently sold his very first short story to *Ellery Queen*, and she was excited about everything. Somebody had told her—she was "nearly certain"—that the ghost across the room used to be a writer. His name, though, didn't mean anything to her. "I think it's something like Cornell Woolrich."

I did a take. Woolrich, from what I'd read, was a recluse, and recluses didn't get around much. I wasn't aware that some of my MWA colleagues, especially Bob Fish, Hans Santesson, and Mike Avallone, had been urging Woolrich to get out of his Park Avenue hotel room and into the world a little. He'd lived most of his adult life in hotel rooms with his mother. When she'd died a few years earlier, he'd withdrawn almost completely from outside contact. Although I no longer read his stuff, the urge to meet one of my youthful idols was too strong, and I crossed over to introduce myself.

That's how I became, for the next few months, part of the Woolrich circle. Most essays written about him since his death mention the fact that he was homosexual. My impression was that he was simply neutral—indifferent to sex, as befits a ghost. Like his idol, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Woolrich was an alcoholic. All the meetings I had with him took place in saloons, usually East Side bistros with the initials P.J. in their names. There was also a cocktail lounge in his hotel. When he didn't have anywhere else to go, he'd sit there and get quietly drunk. He told me one evening that the hotel staff looked after him very well and that when he was no longer able to walk, the bartender and the elevator man always saw to it that he got safely up to his room.

He professed to be indifferent to his writing, and on several occasions he expressed scorn for a scholarly type who kept trying to get him to talk about his novels and stories. For some reason, though, he didn't mind talking to me about his life and work, and most of the hours I spent with



God, she reflected, ordered the grave, for all of us; but God didn't order such burrows in a third-class New York City hotel.

—from *Deadline at Dawn*

Have you ever seen a woman die? I hope you never have to, never do. I mean in violence, at your own hands. It isn't a good thing to see.

—from *Life Is Weird Sometimes*

him in various bars, he filled me in on just about everything he'd ever written. What had made his wild, improbable books and stories so successful was that they were fantasies, imagined with that feverish intensity Woolrich conjured up when writing. I remember being surprised when I asked him about a story of his called "You Take Ballistics," and he mentioned that he'd never been in a police station in his life: "I just thought about what it would be like." Similarly, he'd never ridden a subway, never smoked marijuana, never encountered a practitioner of voodoo. "My first novel took place in a nightclub," he added. "When I wrote it, I'd never been in one."

At times I thought that Woolrich, as he grew increasingly tipsy, was weaving a few fantasies for me. But I found out long after his death that many of the seemingly incredible yarns he told me were actually true. "I was married for a few weeks once in Hollywood," he mentioned one night, "but I didn't like it." Turns out, according to Nevins, that he really had been: "While in Hollywood [in 1930], Woolrich fell in love with and married a producer's daughter who left him after a few weeks and later had the marriage annulled." Woolrich also informed me—and this I haven't confirmed—that somewhere along the way he'd legally changed his name to William Irish. That was because he hated his father and the name Woolrich. Also surprising was the fact that he'd never met Alfred Hitchcock. After seeing *Rear Window* in the fifties, I'd assumed that the two were close chums, a sort of macabre Laurel and Hardy who lunched frequently to discuss murder,

death, anxiety, and suspense.

Woolrich wasn't even especially fond of Hitchcock, chiefly because he'd never been paid for a 1962 television adaptation of *The Black Curtain* on the *Alfred Hitchcock Hour*.

He wanted his friends to call him Con. I suspect it was a nickname he'd fashioned for himself, or possibly something his mother had called him. After a while, I had to admit to myself, Con got to be a pain. His forlorn calls to join him at some saloon where he was drinking alone became annoying. I felt sorry for him and was appalled by the way he was slowly and stubbornly destroying himself, but I got bored. It was like somebody on a ledge who's threatening to jump—somebody who's been out there for, say, six or seven weeks. Like many a ghost, he was detached from the world and had little interest in what was going on. His strong suit was building anxious fantasies based on speculations about how things really were, and he was much better at doing that in print than across a saloon table. Having met a few of my other boyhood idols over the years, I now realize it doesn't have to be as eventually disappointing and unsettling as my encounter with Woolrich; but there's always a risk.

In 1964, after a cross-country courtship, I returned to my native California to marry the lady I'm still living with. When we moved east in 1968 I intended to look Woolrich up. He was supposedly in bad shape; then he was in the hospital. I meant to go visit him, or at least send him a get well card. One morning I read in the *Times* that he was dead. The darkness had finally caught up with him, or he with it. 17

# James Herbert: Bloody Good Storyteller

*Britain's bestselling shockers are the work of a cocky little East Londoner with a degree in art and a genius for advertising.*



Interviewer Lisa Tuttle reports:

James Herbert has been called "Britain's Number One Writer of Horror Fiction"—and not just by his publisher. His novels hit the top of the bestseller lists in Britain, and most of them have done well in the United States, too. But despite his large readership, Herbert's reputation doesn't live up to his sales figures—not, at least, among the *cognoscenti* of horror and fantasy fiction.

In *Danse Macabre*, Stephen King said of Herbert: "... he is held in remarkably low esteem by writers in the genre on both sides of the Atlantic; when I've mentioned his name in the past, noses have automatically wrinkled (it's a little like tinging a bell in order to watch conditioned dogs salivate), but when you inquire more closely, you find that remarkably few people in the field have actually read Herbert—and the fact is that James Herbert is probably the best writer of pulp horror to come along since the death of Robert E. Howard ..."

As the author of *The Rats*, *The Fog*, and *The Dark*, Herbert can probably be held responsible for launching—however unintentionally—a whole new subgenre, known in the trade as "nasties." These are books in which the emphasis is on graphic violence and vividly described scenes of visceral horror: no subtle chills, gradual suspense, or distantly fluttering

ghosts in these books, but rather a full-frontal assault in which rats (or, in the imitations, crabs or cats or swarms of insects) eat people's screaming faces in bleeding technicolor.

And yet the author of a novel about how London is nearly conquered by a strain of vicious rats has traveled quite a way from his pulpish beginnings to the mainstream of popular fiction with such thrillers as *The Spear* and *The Jonah*, in which fast-moving but fairly conventional suspense plots are raised out of the ordinary by the use of supernatural elements which give them a chilling occult significance. And James Herbert is also the author of *Fluke*, a gentle, warm, and

funny fantasy about a man who must come to terms with the fact that he's been reincarnated as a dog.

Herbert was born in 1943, youngest son of parents who were street traders in London's East End. After an education at St. Aloysius College and Hornsey College of Art, both in Highgate, he went to work as an art director for a leading advertising agency in London. In 1978, with five books written in his spare time published, he became a full-time writer. He is married, has two daughters and a dog named Fluke, and lives in a large, elegant, obviously expensive house in Sussex.

Jim Herbert is easy to talk to, quick, candid, with a high self-regard relieved by

## James Herbert: Bloody Good Storyteller

a sense of humor which allows him to laugh even at his own seriousness. And he takes his work very seriously—not only the writing, but the marketing, presentation, and sales of his books as well. When *The Jonah* was published in 1981, Herbert designed new covers for all his books, as well as creating the advertising posters and radio commercials. At the time of this interview, he was involved in working out the design for the cover of *Shrine*, the novel he had delivered to his publishers only a few weeks earlier.

**TZ:** I understand that you started out as an artist. Were you a painter?

**Herbert:** I was doing graphic design, which is advertising, you know. I just wanted to go to art school, learn the basics of advertising—which is the worst place to do it in, an art school, actually—and get out as soon as possible and make money, because I had no dough at all. So I never had a go at the more aesthetic forms of art. It would have been nice, but I was more interested in learning a trade. And that's what I did. I went to art school for four years, then went into advertising, became an art director, then a group head, and eventually a writer.

**TZ:** What made you start writing?

**Herbert:** Um, well, this is going to sound conceited, but I can't help it—it happens to be true. I was made what

they call a group head at the age of twenty-six, and I was handling business of about five million pounds, which was a lot of money, even more in those days. And I loved it, it was a really good job. But after a few years I started to feel that I'd done it all—that there was nothing, no fresh challenge, in the work. It just wasn't enough for me. And working with copywriters, who all had their manuscripts in their drawers and talked about the books they were writing—I thought, well, I'll sit down and do a book. Within about two weeks I had the idea, and I just sat down and did it. But I didn't tell anybody. I just carried on and wrote *The Rats*. When it was accepted, that's when I told everybody. That's when I was walking in and saying "Good morning, hacks," to the copywriters.

Yeah, but I was very fortunate in the job—I wasn't a whiz kid or anything like that, but I suppose I must have been fairly good, and I knew it, and it was that arrogance which said to me, "You can write a book as well." I'd done the advertising bit, so I was gonna write a book—that's how stupid I was! But—it worked. It works.

**TZ:** Why *The Rats*? Do you know where the idea came from?

**Herbert:** Yeah. For a start, I'd heard the old cliché that if you're going to write, you must write about something

you know. And I knew about the East End of London. That's my background. The street where I lived was about half bombed out, and behind the old houses were old stables where the stall-holders from Petticoat Lane kept their barrows. And there were lots of rats, big rats. So I had that in my background, anyway. Then one night I came back from the pub and saw *Dracula* on the late-night film—the old Bela Lugosi *Dracula*. In the film there's a madman who eats spiders, and he bursts into the room and announces that he's had this dream where he looks out the window and on the lawn there were a thousand rats staring up at him with red eyes. And that just clicked. I thought, That's good, that's very visual. As an art director I was into visual things. So the two things came together: my background—the East End and the rats I knew about—and this image of the giant rats staring up at somebody in the window. So I sat down, page one, and went through it.

**TZ:** I've noticed the strong visual sense throughout your books, although sometimes it seems to be an exaggerated, almost comic-book kind of thing. Stephen King said something about E.C. Comics in connection with your work, and when I read that I realized that a lot of scenes in *The Rats* reminded me of those old horror comics. **Herbert:** Yeah, I used to read them when I was a kid. My brother used to get them—those good, American comics. The American kind were all in color—the ones we had over here were just black and white. I used to love all those old *Frankensteins* and *Inner Sanctum*—was it *Inner Sanctum*?

**TZ:** *Tales from the Crypt*?

**Herbert:** Yeah, that's it. I was brought up on those. And I guess it came out in my writing. But I think the books are getting less that way now. See, one thing about me is that every book I've done has been there. It's up front, you can see my development. I don't mean to sound pompous, but I haven't done lots of others—there aren't any others in draft form or manuscript that haven't been published. The first one was *The Rats*. So it's going to be kind of ... raw. Pretty raw and pretty ... I wouldn't say comic-bookish, but since you said it I won't disagree too much. But since then they've developed, and I think they're getting better. The book before the one I've just finished, *The Jonah*, was a lot different. I've jumped out of that kind of



area, although I still see good elements in the first books. Very slam-bang horror, very raw, very inexperienced, but they're still not bad. *The Spear*, I think, got me going onto better things. And before that, *Fluke*, which as far as I'm concerned is one of the best.

TZ: I like it the best, but it's totally different from your others. It's not horror at all.

Herbert: When my publishers first saw the manuscript they couldn't believe it. After three successes, with *The Rats*, *The Fog*, and *The Survivor*, then this jerk does this sweet book about a dog! They tried to change it into a horror story. Unbelievable! And I said, "No. If you don't want to publish the book as it is, you don't have it. Either take it as it is, or you don't take it at all." And they took it exactly as it was.

Because you're commercially successful, you're accused of writing for money. Well, we all write for money—you write for money, I write to feed my kids. But I can only write what I want to do, what I feel like writing. And that's why I did *Fluke*. I knew it would be a gamble, but that's what I wanted to do. And I always work that way. So far, it's worked out for me. Maybe one day I'll do something really silly.

TZ: It seemed to me that *Fluke* could almost have been a children's book, and I wondered if you'd written it for your kids.

Herbert: No. Like everything I do, I wrote it for myself. Totally for myself. And I didn't really believe I was being self-indulgent, because I thought it could be successful. It sold at first very well, then I suppose word got around that it wasn't the usual James Herbert

horror, and sales dropped to less than my others. But that one *now* has sold more than any; it's the one people go in and ask for. And it was made recommended reading for students at one of the universities, which was reward enough for me. I was really pleased about that. It was what I felt like doing. It was an experiment, which is something I feel I do in all the books, in certain ways. The one I've just fin-

in a small town not too dissimilar from the town down the road here, and the townspeople all jump on the bandwagon, build a shrine, the whole thing is hyped up, thousands of pilgrims come to see this girl ... and it all goes disastrously wrong—it's not quite what it seems to be. And this is where the horror part comes in.

TZ: What attracted you to horror in the first place? Do you see that as the

field you want to continue working in? Herbert: Not necessarily, no. As I said, I do whatever I feel like doing when the next one comes up. What attracts me about horror is that you can write a normal story—like *The Jonah*, which could have been just a straight detective story about drug smuggling. You can write a straightforward story, and then you can make something really bizarre happen, something over the top. And that stops me getting bored, stops me getting bogged down with mundane, everyday life. You've got very few limitations when you're writing horror or supernatural, and that's what I like about it. It excites me. And it's a fascinating area anyway, the supernatural. To try and guess what is out there or up there or down there ... it's wonderful just to think about it—and to be paid to think about

He'd drained the rest of the gin before he felt the sharp pain in his left hand. As he jerked the hand up to his mouth, he heard something scuttle away. He threw the bottle after the sound when he tasted blood on the back of his hand. It began to throb and the taste of his own sticky blood made him retch. . . .

Suddenly, he felt the pain again in his outstretched left hand. He shrieked when he realized something was gnawing at the tendons. He tried to get to his feet but only stumbled and fell heavily, bruising the side of this face. As he lifted his hand to his face again he felt something warm clinging to it. Something heavy.

He tried to shake it away, but by now it had a firm grip. He pulled at the body with his other hand and felt brittle hair. Through his panic he understood what held him in this monstrous grip. It was a rat. But it was big. Very big. It could have been mistaken for a small dog. . . .

More teeth sank into his thigh.

As he stood he felt tiny feet running up the length of his body. He actually felt hot, fetid breath as he looked down to see what could climb a man's body with such speed. Huge teeth that were meant for his throat sank into his cheek and tore away a huge flap.

His body poured blood now as he thrashed around. Once he thought he'd found the door, but something heavy leapt up onto his back and pulled him forward onto the floor again.

Rats! His mind screamed the words. Rats eating me alive! God, God help me.

—from *The Rats*  
by James Herbert

ished is so different ... but it's the best yet.

TZ: Can you tell me what it's about? Herbert: Yeah, I can. It's about Catholics, which I am one of, and it's called *Shrine*. It starts with a young girl, deaf, and dumb, in a graveyard collecting dead flowers off the graves. And she has a vision of the Virgin Mary, and suddenly she can speak and hear, and she starts performing miracles. It's set

it is even more wonderful.

A lot of people think I believe in the things I write about. Like *Fluke*: I had letters from people saying, "Well, it's nice to know that you believe in reincarnation, too." And I don't, necessarily.

TZ: You said you were a Catholic. Are you still a Catholic?

Herbert: Yeah, until the book comes out! Yeah, I am a Catholic, but I'm



Herbert's least characteristic novel, *Fluke*, is about a man reincarnated as a dog. Above, the author with his dog—named Fluke.

what they call a lapsed Catholic; I'm a very bad Catholic. My wife is a good Catholic, as good as a Catholic can be, and my kids go to a convent, a private school run by nuns. My local priest—he moved into this area about a year ago—I found out he's my old schoolmaster, he used to teach me English! I used him for a lot of information

about *Shrine*. I grilled him here for about three hours one day, and after the session he thought it a good idea to bless my study. So he did. But he's really worried about the book.... In fact, it's not so bad against the Catholic church. I knock it at the beginning, but by the end I think I've redeemed myself.

TZ: Still on the subject of what you believe, have you ever had any kind of occult experiences? Have you ever seen a ghost?

Herbert: I haven't, and it's very disappointing. A few odd things have happened. Things like: I came in here one day, and there was a big black crow just sitting on the end of this armchair. Now, we don't use this room too much—we use it when we have people in—there's a sitting room just over there that we normally use, so we hadn't been in this room for a couple of weeks. And there was no way that crow could have got in. There was no soot around there (pointing to a white carpet in front of the small fireplace), and anyway it's too narrow for a bird that big. The windows were shut, the doors were shut—there was just no way it could have got in. It was strange. So I opened all the windows... and I flew out. (Laughs.)

TZ: Who are some of the writers you admire, particularly in the field?

Herbert: In this field Stephen King is... well, I just think he's the best. Not just the best horror writer, but one of the best writers in any genre. And he's a lovely guy, and very generous with his praise. I think for a while I was his best PR agent in England, because every time I did an interview I'd say, "Well, Stephen King is the best." And he does the same for me. We started out at about the same time, and I've always maintained that Steve's had two advantages over me: one is that he's had films made; second advantage is he's a far better writer—which really pisses me off! (Laughs.)

So there's Stephen. Um, Peter Straub, I like. I liked *Ghost Story* very much. I'm just reading *Shadowland*. But he takes a bit of getting into, you've got to persevere to begin with. But on the whole, in the horror genre, there ain't many. I can't even think of many I actually read. Do you know, I don't actually read much horror.

TZ: What do you read?

Herbert: Well, I read just about everything. My favorite book of all time is *The History of Mr. Polly* by H.G. Wells. I get the same kind of feeling from that book that I do from Steve King's books. It's a strange thing to say, but I find there's so much more than just horror in Steve's books. There's a sort of charm. I find him sunny. And I found that years ago when I was a kid and read *The History of Mr. Polly*—a certain charm, which I hope is in *Fluke*.

## James Herbert: Bloody Good Storyteller

TZ: Do you have any theories on why people want to read horror stories or go to horror films?

Herbert: Well, there are so many theories. The trouble is, once you put one answer forward there's another question. People like to be jolted, they like to have some kind of shock, because it makes them feel alive. There's nothing better than fear, fear of death, to make you feel very alive. It sets everything running, and that's what people like. The question then is why do they like it? I don't know, I guess it's very primitive, harking back to this animal thing that's inside us. The thing now, with horror films and books, is that people can get the same thrill but know they're safe because they can put the book down and they can leave the movie theater and know it was only a film.

TZ: Have any of your books been made into movies?

Herbert: Yes. *The Survivor* was made into a film, directed by David Hemmings, starring Robert Powell, Jenny Agutter, and Joseph Cotton. They made it in Australia, but I heard nothing about it until I went out there on this promotional tour a few weeks back. Then they put on a special screening for me, and I saw it ... and fell asleep, halfway through. Even I didn't understand it! It was so bad. It was awful!

TZ: I take it you didn't write the screenplay for that.

Herbert: No. Whenever I've been asked to do screenplays I've said no. Because suddenly it becomes hard work. I had years of advertising, of working with other people, and I didn't like doing it. Now I've got the choice, I just don't want to do it. Maybe one day I will, but so far I've turned down about six offers of screenplays. They've made *The Rats*, they made that in New York. I'm going to see that next week at a preview. Whether it sticks to the book, I don't know. I haven't had much to do with it.

So that's it, so far. There have been other offers, but they've fallen through. I think if somebody gets hold of *Shrine* it could be a lovely film. But we'll see.

TZ: What do you think have been the biggest influences on you as a writer? Assuming that the deepest influences go way back.

Herbert: Darkness. Yeah, darkness.

TZ: Were you afraid of the dark?

Herbert: Yeah. I lived in a really creepy old house on a very old, narrow, cobblestone street, and two doors

away was an alleyway called Jack the Ripper Alley. Its real name was Castle Alley, but it was known as the place where Jack the Ripper had cut up one of his victims.

There was an electric light meter down in the basement of our house, and when I was very young—I used to be left alone a lot, as a kid—and the lights would go out, I'd have to find a shilling and go all the way down into the dark, dark basement, and grope my way around in this really creepy place, and find the meter, and put the shilling in, and then rush back upstairs as the lights came on again. My bed-

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**"People like to be jolted. There's nothing better than fear, fear of death, to make you feel very alive."**

---

room was at the top floor, at the top of—well, it wasn't really a spiral staircase, but the house was so narrow that it almost was. Creeping along the old bare floorboards in the dark—oh, God, it was frightening!

Strangely enough, now I love the dark. I love sitting in the dark, it doesn't bother me at all. I guess I'm getting out all the old childhood fears through the books, expunging them.

And I used to see all the old horror films. My eldest brother used to take me around the back way, so I never paid. I wouldn't have been allowed, as a kid, to see all those films, but because I could creep in by the back way and crouch down out of sight, I saw them all. And as a five-year-old, that's going to make an impression; that's going to stick.

And as I said, we used to get all the old horror comics. And I loved hearing ghost stories. My eldest brother used to frighten the life out of me and my middle brother. When my parents were out and we'd gone to bed, he used to do things like put a white sheet over his head and come in. Or the door would swing open, all in

darkness, and we'd hear this slithering across the floor. And we'd call out, "Peter, don't be silly, stop trying to scare us!" Nothing, just this slithering. Then I turned around in bed, and there was this hand coming up the side, coming for me! Well, obviously all that had some effect.

TZ: What happened to your brother?

Herbert: He has a stall in the market. He's a very nice bloke, very funny. My other brother is the good, respectable one—he's an insurance broker.

TZ: I think it's interesting that you were the one who used to be scared, and he was the one who scared you, but now you've grown up—

Herbert: And I'm scaring him. Right.

TZ: Do you have any thoughts about horror fiction as a kind of morality play?

Herbert: Oh, yeah, yeah. Obviously, I get a lot of stick for the horror in my books, particularly the violence. But if you actually read my books, they're very ... principled. There is a high moral tone to them. I mean ... you have to dig for it, but it's there. It would be wrong for me, and nobody would swallow it nowadays; if I were sort of high-minded and moralistic in a soft, wet way. My books are tough. But if you take notice of them, there are certain things that are quite spiritualistic.

I think I preach goodness, strangely enough. I hate to sound pretentious about it, but I think overall I do preach goodness. In all these battles of good against evil, good always comes out on top. Although there's usually a twist at the end, to say you haven't completely won. And again, that is life.

TZ: In *Danse Macabre* Stephen King says you write very firmly in the pulp tradition. Do you mind that? I know you think you're progressing, but do you mind your earlier books being seen as pulp?

Herbert: Yeah, I do. I don't mind Steve saying it, because I know he means it out of kindness, but ... I don't see them as pulp. It's the old thing: because a book sells and a lot of people read it, you get put into this kind of mass-market thing and called pulp. As I said, I think I'm developing all the time. I hope when I die people don't say, "Oh, he's the guy who did *The Fog* and books like that." I hope they say, "Did you read *Fluke*?" You know, I hope that's what they say: "Did you like *Fluke*?" And they're going to say "Yes"—I hope. **17**



# BORDERLAND



by John Brizzolara

*The border he patrolled was the line between reality and nightmare.*

"Kind of spooky," Sanchez said, just to be saying something. He realized immediately that it sounded wrong; it was a "new guy" kind of thing to say.

The moon was a tiny arc of cold light that illuminated nothing. The early November wind was a muffled shriek outside as it wound through the canyons and over the mesa. It sang with a reedy, plaintive voice as it passed the stand of eucalyptus trees known as the Dillon Treeline. Tumbleweeds flew through the air and launched themselves against the darkened Border Patrol Ram Charger, striking the

windshield and the side panels of the van with the sound of fingernails seeking entry.

It was 11:53 p.m. on a Saturday night.

"You'll get used to it," Hagen kept turning left and then right in the passenger seat, peering into the blackness at hurtling shadows. "Goddamn tumbleweeds. I keep thinking we got something out there, and it's just tumbleweeds every time." Hagen was a heavyset man in his early forties with sideburns that were a little too long for his crew-cut hair. He looked like a man who had spent most of his life in some kind of authority over others, but Sanchez had

# BORDERLAND

noticed an extraordinary gentleness about him.

"It's corny, Dead Man's Canyon." Sanchez put on his gloves and raised the collar on his jacket, watching his breath condense against the starlight. He couldn't so much as light a cigarette without giving away their position. If there was anyone out there to give it away to, that is. "They really call it that, huh?"

"Yep. The Mexicans call it pretty much the same thing. I guess we got the name from them. I don't really know."

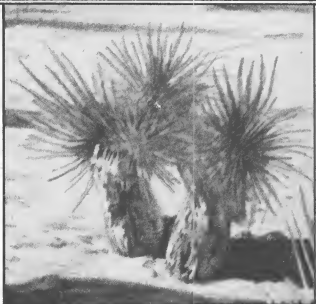
"Sounds like kid stuff. *The Hardy Boys and the Secret of Dead Man's Canyon*. Something like that."

"Yeah." Hagen pointed with his chin at the umbrella of shadow, like a huge wound, in the mesa ahead of them. "You can't see the bottom of that thing from anywhere around. Not unless you get right up to it. There's a good mile and a half of it, too, between the border and Spring Canyon." He spat tobacco out the window. "You got bandit activity, a rape, a body? I'd say a good seven, eight times outta ten it's in Dead Man's."

Sanchez was still unused to the casualness with which the other agents dealt with the atmosphere of violence and desperation in their job. It was his second week on the patrol along the San Diego/Tijuana border and already he had had rocks thrown at him, been kicked in the crotch, and retrieved the body of a drowned boy from the Tijuana River levy. Now for the first time he was patrolling the Browns Field sector along the Otay Mesa to the east; what the illegals called *El Cerro* and the agents called the Eastern Front. It was here that the bandits who preyed on the groups of fence-cutters, or *alambristas*, found business to be the most profitable. Mostly inaccessible, even with four-wheel-drive vehicles, the canyons provided a perfect ambush gallery for their victims and an impossible obstacle course for *La Migra*, the Border Patrol.

In the past three weeks there had been a rise in incidents along the Eastern Front. One narcotic overdose: the body had been tossed over the fence to the U.S. side from a hotel window. Another boy, shot to death, had been discovered near the microwave dish in the E3 sector—no one knew why, nor would they ever know. And there had been three rapes, one of which was stopped in progress by Border agents; the other two were now statistics in an open file in the prosecution office. As always, people were victimized in one way or another, often by the "coyotes" or the guides themselves, then left to wander the mesa to be arrested by the Patrol. These would be returned to Mexico the next day, destitute and without prospects, but alive. They were the lucky ones. Many found their way into unmarked graves. There was no way of ever really knowing how many.

Hagen, still pivoting his head from side to side and shifting his position to see into the near-total



blackness outside the van, picked up the radio microphone from the dashboard. "Ten-twenty-eight here. This is 1028 in sector E4 west of the Dillon Treeline. Anybody got a scope shootin' this way? It's blacker'n a banker's heart out here and we can't tell the bad guys from the tumbleweed without a program. Over."

"Ten-twenty-eight, this is 901. That you, Hagen? Over."

"Yeah, me and Sanchez. You got a scope, Gary? Over."

"I got the green eye on ya. You boys are all alone. You and the rabbits. Can't see down into Dead Man's, but Moody's Canyon is clear and Behan and Velsor are pickin' up some good ones in Spring. Over."

The green eyes were the infrared nightscopes that showed up body heat as a pale patch on a green background. It gave the understaffed Border Patrol a vital edge during the rush hours between dusk and dawn.

"Okay Gary, we're gonna stay in position for a while. Over."

"Roger. How's Sanchez doin'? Over."

Sanchez leaned into the mike and said, "I'm freezing my huevos off. I can't believe this is California. Uh, over."

The laughter came over the speaker, lifeless and metallic. "You'll get your circulation goin' before too long. At least you're not gettin' rocked. Over."

"I'm goin' down to take a look, Gary. Swing that eye around every once in a while, will ya? Over." Hagen poised the mike back over its cradle.

"Got ya covered, 1028. I'm goin' off in a few minutes, but Dave's comin' on. He'll keep ya company, okay? Over. Out."

Hagen opened his door and climbed down out of the van. "You wanna take a look around with me?" he invited.

"Sure." Sanchez lifted his flashlight and his nightstick from the seat. Outside, he felt he was on the surface of some featureless, distant planet.

# He felt he was on the surface of some featureless, distant planet.

"Only bring one of those. Keep one hand free," Hagen corrected him.

"Oh, yeah." He followed the other agent to the edge of Dead Man's Canyon and looked down. It was as if a piece of the earth had fallen away and they were looking into a starless void. At first there was no sound except for the wind and the engine of a small plane in the distance, and then they both heard a dry rustling below them; it might have been someone whispering. "You hear that?" he asked Hagen quietly.

By way of answer, the older agent aimed his flashlight into the canyon and played it briefly over the *cholla* cactus, the gnarled, hollowed-out bushes known as "hotels" that served as way stations for illegal immigrants on their trek north. The beam found the floor of the canyon and the slight trail that had been worn over the years by illicit traffic. He switched it off quickly. "I don't see anything."

"What about that voice? Didn't you hear that?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I did. I'll tell you what, partner. I'm goin' down there. You run up about fifty yards and move down, kind of head 'em off at the pass."

Sanchez nodded and set off at a trot. A rabbit darted across his path and startled him.

It was a long way from New York, he thought. He had been happy to get the job and the academy was easy enough. The San Diego border sounded pretty exciting, riding the ranges, mending fences, pursuits and arrests. Now that he was here, though, the fantasy had eroded—leaving only the minutiae of routine in an unreal situation. The shabby, hopeless people he apprehended every shift by the dozen saddened him and made him wonder just what kind of a job he was doing after all. The dream of Western Individualism was a fine one and promised —from a distance—to suit him, but in the end he couldn't relate to the cowboy role, not the way Hagen could with his chewing tobacco and his "head 'em off at the pass, pard" manner. First as a Puerto Rican kid growing up in an Irish neighborhood in the Bronx, then as a city adjuster surrounded by friends who were actors, dancers, or writers, and

now trying to pass as a good-old-boy member of the posse in the American Southwest, Sanchez increasingly came to define himself by where he did not belong. His gun slapped against his hip as he ran.

After about fifty yards, he started down slowly. The footing was bad and the *cholla* punctured his pants legs. Pieces of the cactus broke off and worked their way into his boots. He stopped at intervals to remove them, listening for the sounds they had heard earlier. To his left he could see Hagen swinging his flashlight. On the wind, Hagen's voice carried down the canyon. In Spanish he shouted, "*La Migra! Salgan!*"

Suddenly the wind increased and two shadows hurtled past Sanchez running up the embankment. They both wore dark clothing. One, he could see, was a woman, probably an Indian—judging by her serape and braided hair. He turned and shouted, "Hagen! Over here!" and started to labor back up the hill after them. Someone rushed past him from behind; he turned abruptly and landed face down in the *cholla*. Stifling a cry of pain, he caught a glimpse of white tennis shoes running past him. In his Puerto Rican accent, he called after them, "*Alto. No les haremos daño!*"

He got to his feet and made it to the top. To the west, silhouetted against the lights of Tijuana and San Ysidro, he could see the figure wearing the tennis shoes dash across the mesa for the relative safety of the next canyon. Sanchez was in good physical shape for a smoker and he closed the distance between them in seconds just as his prey dropped over the ledge of the next depression. Blood, where the cactus had cut him, fell into Sanchez's eye and he blinked. In another moment he could see, but he had lost the *pollo*. He cursed and turned back toward the Ram Charger.

He froze when he heard Hagen's scream.

Dropping his nightstick and drawing the .357 from his holster, Sanchez ran toward the sound, shouting, "Hagen! Hagen!" At the edge of the canyon he launched himself downward, taking huge strides, barely keeping his balance, unmindful of the cactus. "Hagen, answer me!" It seemed to take forever to get down. At the bottom he found the trail and ran south until he could hear heavy, ragged breathing and a kind of sobbing. "Hagen, goddamnit!"

"Over here." The voice was barely in control. "I'm all right."

"Shine your light so I can find you."

"I can't ... I lost it."

"What happened?" Sanchez fell into tumbleweeds that had accumulated against a man-made rock break in the trail. He struggled in the weeds for a moment and pulled his Bic lighter and ignited it. The first thing he saw was a crude crucifix set into the top of the pile of rocks he had stumbled against. A grave.

He looked around him and saw Hagen, his eyes

# BORDERLAND

ringed with fear, struggling to free himself from another interlocked mass of tumbleweeds. The flashlight lay to his right. Sanchez picked it up and shone it on his companion. "What the hell happened, man?"

As he helped Hagen from the bed of dried bracken and rock he could see the other man's eyes darting to either side of him. He was trembling as if suddenly aware of the cold. "Let's just get out of here, okay?"

They made their way back up the embankment. At the top, they could hear the radio from the van calling into the night. "Ten-twenty-eight, come in. What's going on, 1028? You read, Hagen? You request assistance?"

Inside the Ram Charger, Sanchez answered the call. "This is 1028. We had something good. They got away. We got fouled up a little. Just some cuts and scrapes, I think. Anybody have a scope on us?"

"This is 901. Dave here. I've had the eye on you for the past ten minutes or so. I saw one of you guys come up out of Dead Man's runnin' across the mesa chasing something, but I don't know what the hell it was. I wasn't getting any hot spots. What were you chasin', anyway? You're the only ones out there."

"You didn't see them? There were three of them. One of 'em was a woman."

"Sorry, buddy. Had my eye peeled and all I got was you."

"Okay. We missed 'em. Forget it. You might want to advise E3 and E2, they might come out somewhere in Spring's or Moody's. Over."

"Roger, you okay?"

"Yeah. Okay. Over."

Sanchez turned to Hagen. He switched on the instrument lights and in the green glow he could see that Hagen had scratches running down one side of his face as if an animal had clawed him. Other than that he seemed unhurt. The older man held his face in his hands and said softly, "My dear God, I am losing my ever-loving mind."

"What happened, man? I heard you scream."

Hagen looked at him. Even in the ghostly light he could see the man was pale. "I can't tell you, Sanchez. I ... don't really know."

"Tell me. If there's somebody out there, I wanna know, man. Okay?"

Hagen looked at him and drew in a breath. He seemed to size up his partner or maybe how what he was going to say would sound. After a minute he said, "When I got to the bottom, I saw maybe fifty, a hundred people. *Pollos*, wirecutters, illegals, men, women, kids. I couldn't believe it. I'd never seen so many in one place, not since we caught that whole shitload comin' out of the Flamenco years ago. I didn't know what to do. There were too many of them. I turned to go back up and radio in when I slipped. I fell right on top of a group of

them and then I saw ..."

He stopped speaking though his jaw continued to work ineffectually. He shook his head and searched the stars for the words.

"What, man?"

What are you saying?"

His smile was an attempt at reassurance, but seemed instead to be inappropriate and frightening in the dashboard lights. "I don't know. I don't know what I'm saying. Forget it."

"Okay, Hagen."

Take it easy."

Something threw itself against the side of the van with a raking sound like ground glass on slate. The wind picked up its keening. Hagen drew his pistol and then the stars were blotted from the windshield by a shape that pressed itself to the van with a rasping, urgent noise.

"Take it easy, man! It's a tumbleweed, Hagen. That's all it is, see. I found you in a bunch of them down there. That's what scratched you up." Even as he said it, Sanchez studied the deep grooves on the agent's cheeks that ran from his temple to his neck and were already beginning to scab over.

"Yeah, tumbleweeds." Hagen put his gun away. "Look, we gotta go out there again. I've gotta see what the hell is going on. You understand? I've gotta know. One minute they were there and the next ... I've gotta know if I'm crackin' up or what." For the first time Hagen noticed the blood on Sanchez's face. "What happened to you? Your face is cut up."

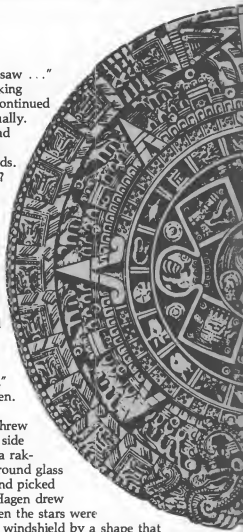
"I fell in the damned cactus. I was chasing three of them. There's gotta be more. Let's go, only this time we stay together."

"Right." Hagen paused. "Sanchez, you saw 'em, right? You get a good look?"

"I couldn't see anything except one was a woman, a Yaqui, I think, and one guy was wearing white sneakers."

Hagen fixed his partner with a searching look. His fear was infecting Sanchez now. "Did they look, you know ... regular to you?"

"I don't know, man. I don't know what you mean. I told you I barely saw them at all. You





sure you're all right?"  
"Yeah, forget it. Let's go."

They opened the doors against the wind.

Their heartbeats and the sound of their boots on the crushed stone of the mesa filled the night.

At the edge of the canyon they both played their beams into the maw of darkness. As if on cue, the wind rose again out of the abyss, tossing dust and branches, bowing the manzanita first one way, then another, as if frenziedly kowtowing to some rising monarch of the underworld. Their lights created wild, protean shadows.

Sanchez saw them first, again.

"Over here, Hagen!" He swung his beam to the right, where sounds of sudden movement had drawn his eyes. Several figures had been lying on the brush, just near the top of the canyon. Now they rose and broke for the mesa, running past the two men.

Sanchez gave chase to the one closest to him: a boy in white sneakers.

As he ran he heard Hagen's voice in the distance. "I'll turn on the floodlights on the truck and call in. There's too many."

Sanchez turned his head as he ran; he could just make out, against the stars, dozens of figures to either side of him racing north in eerie silence. He thought he saw the same Indian woman he had chased earlier, but in the darkness it was impossible to be sure.

He lunged at the boy he was chasing, reaching out his hand toward his jacket collar. He flew several feet and hit the ground, his fingers closing on air.

When Sanchez looked up he saw a figure towering over him; a Mexican wearing a straw ranchero's hat and rags, on his face an impossibly wide grin. The man raised what looked like some kind of pale garden tool over his head. He whispered at Sanchez in hoarse Spanish, "The mesa is a lonely place to die, eh, *La Migra*?"

As the figure brought his arm down, Sanchez

drew his gun. He fired upward point-blank at the man's chest area. In the brief flash from the muzzle, Sanchez could see that his assailant had no weapon. The white, clawlike tool was his hand and there was no flesh on it.

The image lingered on his retinas, echoing in his mind like the report from the magnum, repeating and decaying through the canyons.

Suddenly, the mesa was bathed with light as Hagen threw on the headlights and floodlamps mounted above the Ram Charger. Over the loud hailer, he called, "*Alto, por favor! La Migra!* There is nowhere for you to go. The sector ahead of you is ..." He stopped. His words echoed, carried on the wind, and died.

Hagen, like Sanchez, was looking out at the harshly illuminated landscape that should have been covered with running men, women, and children. There was nothing but tumbleweeds, more of them than either of them had ever seen, being carried northward on the wind in oddly graceful leaps, without a sound.

When Sanchez joined Hagen back at the truck, the radio was clamoring for their attention. Hagen ignored it, transfixed by the spectacle of the migrating tumbleweed.

"Come in, 1028. I can see you guys. What's goin' on? What are you shootin' at? Something wrong with your radio?"

Sanchez picked up the call. "Nine-oh-one, this is 1028. You scoping us?"

"Yeah. What are you doing? I just watched you run about fifty yards, jump in the air, land on your face, and fire a round at a ball of dead weeds."

Sanchez and Hagen looked at each other in silence. Finally Hagen shook his head from side to side. Sanchez nodded in agreement and pressed the button on the side of the mike. "We got ... uh, a bad visibility situation here. The dust and the wind. We just, uh ... thought we detected, uh, activity. All's quiet, though. Over."

"Well, you might as well come on in and get coffee. You're not going to get anything now, not down there. We're pickin' 'em up everywhere tonight but Dead Man's. Since midnight it's been *Día de Muertos* and there's no coyote going to bring anyone through there for twenty-four hours. You know how they are. Over."

"Yeah. Over and out."

"*Día de Muertos*," Sanchez repeated. He lit a cigarette with shaking hands. "November second."

"Yeah." Hagen kept his hands on the steering wheel to steady them. "All Souls' Day."

"Day of the Dead."

The tumbleweeds continued to dance in the headlights, occasionally throwing themselves against the truck to whisper with dry, brittle voices.

# The Long, Long Road to DUNE

by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier

*One version would have been ten hours long and heavy with mysticism. The one you'll see in December is shorter, slicker—and ten times more expensive.*



The final special effects have been completed, the sets have been torn down, the play dates are all booked, and the mammoth publicity campaign has already begun. Whether *Dune* will be the blockbuster that producers Dino and Raffaella De Laurentiis hope for is anybody's guess, but one thing is certain: when it opens this December, it will be the most eagerly awaited science fiction film of all time. As far back as the 1983 World Science Fiction Convention in Baltimore, for example, when writer Paul Sammon showed slides of the production and his video featurette, *Destination: Dune*, the preview drew thousands of fans, who saw author Frank Herbert explaining on tape that he was totally satisfied with the film adaptation of his book.

Herbert's interplanetary epic first saw print in 1963 in the sf magazine *Analog* under the title "Dune World," and was published as the novel *Dune* in 1965. It quickly proved to be one of the most remarkable works of science fiction ever written—and an unprecedented bestseller. Winner of the Hugo and Nebula awards, printed in millions of copies, and translated into more

than a dozen languages, the saga has been carried on through four sequels: *Dune Messiah* (1969), *Children of Dune* (1976), *God-Emperor of Dune* (1981), and, this year, *Heretics of Dune*. In 1983 Herbert signed a multi-million-dollar contract for a sixth volume in the series, tentatively titled *Chapter House: Dune*, and, it's reported, has already delivered the manuscript to his publisher. In a recent *Newsweek* interview the sixty-three-year-old author declared, "I haven't another one in mind"—but it's hard to imagine Herbert abandoning his greatest creation.

## THE DUNE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

*Dune's* colossal success quickly attracted Hollywood attention, but the translation of the saga from the pages of a pulp magazine to the silver screen was anything but a simple process, rivaling the labyrinthine intrigues of Herbert's novel. One of the first to be interested in acquiring film rights, in

Above left: Director Lynch.

Below: Would-be mystic Jodorowsky.



Frank "Moebius" Giraud's design for the Reverend Mother Gaius Helen Mohiam.

the late 1960s, was *Planet of the Apes* producer Arthur P. Jacobs. According to a 1975 interview with James Herbert, Jacobs's company, Apjac Productions, planned to film *Dune* in an area northeast of Ankara, Turkey, with Herbert himself as technical advisor. At that time, the film was still in the treatment stage; no director or scriptwriter had been chosen. The project was abandoned when, in 1973, Jacobs died suddenly of a heart attack.

The next person to acquire rights to the book was a wealthy Frenchman, Michel Seydoux. To write and direct the film, Seydoux called on Chilean-born filmmaker Alexandro Jodorowsky, whose previous credits included the surreal epics *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain*. Jodorowsky was assisted during all phases of preproduction by French comic-book artist Jean Giraud, well known in the U.S. as "Moebius" for his work in *Heavy Metal* magazine. Under the director's guidance, Giraud created over a thousand pages of extremely elaborate storyboards and designs. "For me," Jodorowsky told an interviewer in 1976, "Giraud is a complete artist. He is not only a comic-book author, but he is also a painter and a poet."

Jodorowsky's plans called for the artifacts, costumes, and sets of each of *Dune's* four planets to be designed by a different well-known sf artist. Giraud was to design the civilization on Caladan, the forest-covered world of the Atrides. The golden octagonal fortress-planet of the Emperor was to be conceived by British illustrator Christopher Foss, celebrated for his ultrarealistic depictions of spaceships

and futuristic technology. Gedi Prime, stronghold of the corrupt and sadistic Harkonnen, was to be designed by Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger, who created the look of the Ridley Scott film *Alien*. American comic-book artist Richard Corben, author of "Den" and other *Heavy Metal* fare, was to bring to life the planet of the Bene Gesserit, with its weird pyramidal edifices.

Music, too, was to be an integral part of Jodorowsky's vision of *Dune*, with different rock groups contributing their own special styles to each planet. Pink Floyd had accepted the assignment of the Imperial Planet; a popular French band, Magma, was to create a score for the Harkonnen homeworld; and the British group Henry Cow was to provide music for the Bene Gesserit. Originally, special effects were to have been handled by Douglas (Brainstorm) Trumbull; later, impressed by his work on John Carpenter's *Dark Star*, Jodorowsky planned to entrust them to Dan O'Bannon. O'Bannon met with Giger and Giraud in France, later bringing Giger to work with him on *Alien*.

Filming of Jodorowsky's *Dune* was to take place in Tassili, in the Sahara Desert, with hundreds of actors and extras. Among the actors mentioned for the film were Jodorowsky's own son, Brontis, in the central role of Paul Atreides. Salvador Dali had been considered for the role of the Padishah Emperor (in fact, Giraud's original concept for the character is a likeness of the famous Spanish artist), but he fell prey to a political disagreement with Jodorowsky when he condoned Franco's execution of several young Basque militants—a stand the director found "so odious," as he told a French film magazine in 1976, that he preferred to tear up the contract. Perhaps more to the point are rumors that the aging painter had demanded a salary of \$100,000 an hour!

The most interesting aspect of Jodorowsky's project was undoubtedly his personal vision of *Dune*. "I interpret and continue the book," he told an interviewer. "I don't believe that one should take a novel and fail to put it at one's service. As the anarchists say, 'Neither God nor master!' I take the torch and continue further on. If not, it's not really worth it." Jodorowsky spent two years writing a scenario which was then dialogued by French sf author Michel Demuth, who'd translated Frank Herbert's work.



A group of Fremmen—with Stilgar (Everett McGill) in center—watches an offscreen Paul Atreides prove himself as a sandrider.

In his screenplay, Jodorowsky went beyond the Herbert novel. At the end of his version, the death of Paul the Prophet "fertilizes" the planet Dune and turns it into a giant collective intelligence, a living planet. This new Dune, in turn, gives birth to a living, sentient galaxy, and onward, until the attainment of a communal, completely spiritual universe, one with man. Inherent in these concepts are certain mystical themes dear to Jodorowsky. For him, the spice that the planet exports is the science fictional equivalent of the "projection powder" of the alchemists, those medieval experimenters who, in seeking the fabled Philosopher's Stone which could transmute matter into purer elements and baser metals into gold, were also seeking to spiritually transform and purify themselves.

Because of Paul's efforts, the planet Dune itself becomes a giant Philosopher's Stone which enables the entire human race to realize its collective goal and become one with God.

Jodorowsky's *Dune* was scheduled to begin filming in September of 1975, but the incredible amount of preproduction work that the director insisted upon held up the starting date by almost two years. (In a 1983 interview in *Starlog*, Frank Herbert estimated that the film Jodorowsky was planning "couldn't have been done in less than ten hours.") In the end the production costs, originally set at \$6 million, had escalated to \$9.5 million. Unable to find new sources of financing, producer Seydoux was forced to abandon the project.

Its failure did not discourage other

The climactic duel between Paul Atreides (Kyle MacLachlan) and Feyd (Sting).



# JUNE

producers; rights to the entire *Dune* series were eventually purchased by Dino De Laurentiis, who had already brought the world *King Kong* and *Conan*. Since Herbert's novel had originally been recommended to him by his daughter Raffaella, De Laurentiis made her the producer of the film. In January, 1980, he asked Ridley Scott to direct. Scott, who had just completed *Alien*, worked on the project for nine months, once more hiring H.R. Giger to create numerous storyboards and production designs and hiring pop novelist Rudolph Wurlitzer to write a script. (Herbert was reportedly infuriated when, on reading the first draft, he came across an incestuous sex scene that Wurlitzer had injected between Paul and Jessica, their union producing the child Alia—a far cry from the novel's explanation of her origin.) Scott finally abandoned *Dune* when its budget reached an estimated \$50 million and went on to do a more restrained sf project, *Blade Runner*.

It was Raffaella who suggested David Lynch, director of the underground classic *Eraserhead* and of the widely acclaimed *The Elephant Man*, which her father had liked. "Dino had never seen *Eraserhead*," Lynch told a 1983 interviewer, "and if he had, he probably wouldn't have hired me. All his kids saw *Eraserhead* in his living room, and I think he just walked through and saw about ten minutes of it, at most."

Lynch was given a contract not only to direct, but to write the script in conjunction with Eric Bergren and Christopher DeVore, who had helped Lynch script *The Elephant Man*. Not having read *Dune* before, Lynch set about discovering the book. "I liked the different worlds," he says, "and the fact that it was more realistic than *Star Wars*."

By the third draft, Bergren and DeVore were out, and in eighteen months Lynch delivered his own screenplay. After a half-dozen revisions, De Laurentiis declared himself satisfied. "I'd have deadlines," Lynch remembers, "then we'd have script conferences. Then I'd go back to rewrite and have more deadlines and more script conferences! Then, during the scriptwriting period, we also started to design the picture. The production designer came on, the costume designer came on, et cetera. We started casting and looking for locations. During all this time, I had to be writing. It was plenty of work to do!"

## THE DUNE WELL GET

For various practical reasons, Universal and De Laurentiis decided to shoot *Dune* at the Churubusco Studios in Mexico, and the official budget was set at \$30 million. (This has reportedly climbed to more than \$60 million.) In an interview on the set with the *San Diego Union*, Raffaella De Laurentiis weighed the savings and the costs of filming in Mexico: "You have to figure on something taking three times as long as it might take in another place, but you do get it done," she said. "In the building of the sets here we have saved fifty percent, but that's the only area. The cost differences are not that great. Maybe if you come here to do a regular modern movie, the picture will be cheaper. But with *Dune* we had to create a whole world and bring in entire crews, put them up in hotels and send them home when their marriages were breaking up. This takes a lot away from the cost-effectiveness of cheaper labor... Nowhere else in the world are there eight stages where we could work. In England, we would have to use three studios to get this much space."

"It was the only place to make the film," confirms Lynch, "for pretty nearly every reason you can think of. We had seventy-five sets, we had eight giant sound stages, and the desert was right up the road!" Was Lynch concerned about shooting in a country that has its own problems, both political and financial? "That makes it exciting!" he says. "There's always something going wrong. There's always something happening, and always something to talk about. It's a fantastic world."

Filming began on March 30, 1983, with Frank Herbert present to give the first clap of the clapboard. The shoot lasted for twenty-three weeks, finishing on September 20, but was followed by extensive postproduction, including the preparation of more special effects. From the start, the film was surrounded by great secrecy, and numerous confidential memos attest to the need for security. One early memo from Lynch, written before filming began, compared the production to "steam in a giant boiler. It is already building up considerable pressure. Any leaks concerning what we are doing on this project will decrease the curiosity factor and cause us to lose power. I beg you to keep this in mind."

One area of speculation concerned how closely the film will follow Herbert's book. Judging by the draft of

Lynch's script that we were able to obtain, the film should follow the novel quite faithfully. To be sure, the novel's complicated political intrigues have been refined and simplified, but the substance of the plot has been preserved, and the script makes surprisingly few concessions to the general public. Indeed, viewers not familiar with the book may have some difficulty following the flow of Lynch's screenplay. In the beginning, for example, a Guild Navigator makes an allusion to the planet Ix—a name familiar to Herbert's readers, but one which might create a certain sense of confusion among the uninitiated. On the other hand, Lynch's script clarifies the mechanics of the plot against Duke Leo Atreides and his family. Jealous of the Duke's popularity, the Emperor is here seen—more clearly than in the novel—as the instigator of the conspiracy, with the Baron Harkonnen acting as his instrument.

The basic plot remains the same: the exile from Caladan, the arrival on Dune, the treason of Dr. Yueh, the Harkonnen's victory, Paul's adolescence with the Fremen, the final attack on Arrakeen—all are included. Certain scenes, however, have been left out, most likely due to time considerations. Fans, for instance, may regret the absence of the famous banquet scene that takes place shortly after the Atreides' arrival on Dune, during which Paul and his father engage in a verbal duel with some of Arrakis' notables. Also missing in the screenplay is a character dear to the hearts of *Dune*'s fans: Count Hasimir Fenring, personal assassin of the Emperor and "kwizatz haderach" eunuch. Although it is true that Fenring is a minor character in the book, the final scene in which the Emperor demands that Fenring kill Paul, to which the Count refuses after sensing the almost fraternal bond that unites him to the young hero, is one of the most memorable in the book. However, the Bene Gesserit, Herbert's galactic sisterhood of Mendelian manbreeders, have been retained, and so has the Navigator's Guild, which is portrayed in the screenplay as the occult entity which manipulates both the Emperor and the events of the film.

Lynch's screenplay opens with the Emperor expecting, and dreading, the visit of a Third Stage Guild Navigator. The description of the Navigators and how they function is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding changes Lynch has introduced. In his script, Lynch





Lady Jessica (Francesca Annis)  
poses before the Great  
Staircase in Castle Caladan.

# DUNE

divides the Guild into First, Second, and Third Stage Navigators. In an early scene, hundreds of Second Stage Navigators descend from a Guild ship. They are humanoids whose eyes are entirely blue (an effect caused by the absorption of spice, which gives longevity and precognitive abilities, enabling them to guide ships into hyperspace), dressed in spacesuits containing an orange spice-based gas, or "melange." They accompany a Third Stage Navigator to a secret meeting with the Emperor, during which the deaths of the Atrides are sealed. The Third Stage Navigator is transported inside a huge black metal tank more than forty feet long and studded with valves and regulating instruments. Chemicals drip and spill from beneath it.

Guildsmen were not described in great detail in *Dune*, but one similar to Lynch's picture appeared in *Dune Messiah*. Obviously the product of mutations caused by life in a "spice-filled atmosphere, the Third Stage Navigator bears little resemblance to a human being. In the script, he is described as "a cross between a pasty, pale human being and a fleshy grasshopper. The creature is over twenty feet long ... His head is enormous, almost four feet high and very fleshy, like a huge grasshopper head. The eyes are totally blue. His voice is a high, fleshy whispering, and an intricate electrical apparatus in the front of the tank translates what he says into English and broadcasts it into the room."

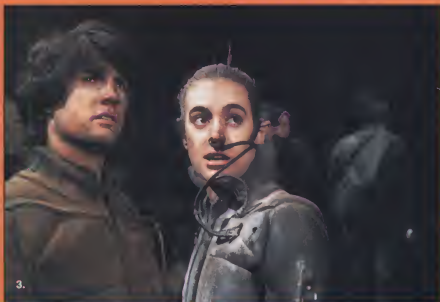
In a later scene, the Atrides fleet, composed of 3,415 spaceships, leaves Caladan to take possession of Arrakis. When one of the Guild's giant starships appears, the Atrides vessels enter its hold. The size of the Guild's ship defies comprehension; its hold already contains thousands of other space vessels en route to various points in the universe.

The scene then changes to the ship's two-thousand-foot-high control room. There, swimming in the spice-filled atmosphere, a Third Stage Navigator hovers around a six-dimensional, multi-layered replica of the entire universe. The Navigator manipulates the miniature universe with its hands, and the miniature elongates ... Thus begins the voyage into hyperspace. (In an earlier version of the script, anticipating the mutation of Paul's son in *God-Emperor of Dune*, the existence of still another order of being—Fourth Stage Navigators—is hinted at. In the end, they are revealed





ynch films author Frank Herbert (right, with  
board), beginning *Dune*'s first day of film-  
2. The evil Baron Harkonnen (Kenneth  
Millan, right), airborne using anti-grav  
ices, and Piter (Brad Dourif) interrogate a  
ne Duke Leto (Jurgen Prochnow). 3. Paul  
Chani (Sean Young), wearing their water-  
serving stillsuits. 4. The film's helicopter-  
ornithopter also relies on anti-grav devices.  
ynch directs Alia (Alicia Roanne Witt) be-  
the robed Sardaukar soldiers. 6. The Rev-  
nd Mother Mohiam (Sian Phillips) and  
d. 7. Paul and Lady Jessica. 8. Thufir  
wat (Freddie Jones), the Atreides family's  
ntat—human computer—and Paul's mentor.  
he Baron's servants. Played by extras, they  
e their eyes and ears sewn shut.





The Shadout Mapes (Linda Hunt) brandishes her crysknife.



Piter (Brad Dourif) prepares to kill the traitor Dr. Yueh.

to be giant, five-hundred-foot-long worms with pale, humanoid faces.)

Lynch's interpretation of Herbert's universe may not be as radical as Jodorowsky's, but it is no less personal. For example, his description of Gedi Prime, the Harkonnen's planet, while undoubtedly impressive, cannot help but bring to mind some of the sordidness of both *Eraserhead* and *The Elephant Man*: The shot begins "from high above, looking down on a black steel shuttle landing field in the middle of a vast sea of black oil: A small cable car zooms up toward us on an elevator of black steel. The car comes to a stop and is transferred to another cable, and it begins rocketing horizontally across the black oil lake. In the distance can be seen a gigantic black city in the shape of a rectangular box over one hundred stories high. Each level is lined with columns and passageways, but no doors. Before the city there are rows of gigantic black steel towering figures atop massive furnaces. The fixtures serve as chimneys, and black smoke billows out of their mouths."

In order to bring Lynch's vision to life, more than seventy-five sets had to be built on the eight sound stages of Churubusco Studios under the supervision of production designer Tony Masters (*Lawrence of Arabia*, 2001), and the largest blue screen ever con-

structed (35 feet high by 108 feet long) was employed for front projection. A special color code was conceived, both to avoid confusion and to better individualize each decor. For example, the throne room appears to have been constructed of gold and jade, and is decorated with superb mosaics mixing Roman, Aztec, Moorish, and Venetian styles. The decors of the planet Dune itself were done predominantly in black, tan, and red. Dune's inhabitants, the nomadic Fremen, live in immense subterranean caverns that have been carved from rock by means of lasers. The idyllic ambience of the *Astreides' Caladan* is a palace with walls of beautifully polished wood. The Baron's oily black world shows the influence of Victorian architecture and was created with forged metal.

*Dune's* exteriors were filmed in and around Mexico City. The parking lot of the Azteca Stadium served as a landing field; a 100-by-300 foot reservoir (for the Fremen's secret water reserves) was built in a hangar in Izapalapa; a lava wall, 65 feet high, was erected at Las Aguilas Rojas. As for the numerous scenes representing the surface of Dune itself, these were shot in the Samalayuca Desert near Juarez. In order to make the desert resemble as close as possible the barren, lifeless Dune, it was completely cleared of all

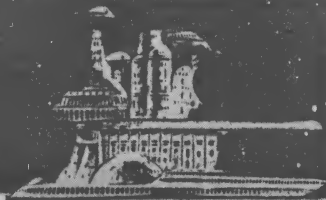
traces of plants and other organic matter before each take.

The enormous number of special effects required by Lynch's script were another problem; at one point, for example, it called for the landing on Dune of all 3,415 *Atreides* vessels in rows of fifty! Working with all the effects technology was a trying experience, says Lynch, "but in every shot of *Eraserhead* there was all sorts of rigging, even though it was on a small scale. And on *The Elephant Man* there were things that didn't seem like effects, but were. You get used to these things—and with *Dune*, there were just way, way more of them! We had every kind of technique going, and a totally international crew—blue-screen guys from here and from England, model-makers from here, England, Italy, and Spain. Everything was storyboarded, everything was broken down so people knew what they had to do. What you really learn is that whatever you can think of, you can do. There's a way to do it. It's just a matter of having good people that can pull it off."

Have they pulled it off? We won't know till *Dune* opens in December. One thing we do know, however, is that the many people who worked on this film have put more than just their time into it; they've put a bit of themselves as well. **17**

# THE GREY LAWNS' COLD

by Larry Tritten



*The stars were chilly  
diamonds in the distance  
—but close enough to burn  
your brains out.*

**W**e were doing crazy time on one of those rocky little worlds out near the tip of Archer's bow, a place that wasn't much bigger than a Homesteader's Asteroid. If you think there's nothing happening on, say, Bedlam or Oceanus, you should have seen this turf. For openers, there wasn't another creature great or small anywhere on the world, and there wasn't a scrap of vegetation. Picture this: a condominium perched on a rubblebar shelf in the middle of a sea of dunes, and five of us doing crazy time—no video, no drugs, no game bags; nothing. The air tasted like a burnt tire and there was a wind full of icy daggers that kept us inside whenever we weren't working.

What we had to do out there was test a lot of equipment that the government had left over from the last war, I mean the police action, out near Betty Centaurus: space tents, flivvers, oilbirds, space furniture, radium shields, Brinell gear, generators, mechanical ceilings, things like that. Someone had suggested that they take the whole collection and drop it through a warp, and they were probably right, but Uncle had paid a lot of cash for the gimmickry and he wasn't about to toss it. So there we were.

Me. I'm a time-lifer who lost his stripes way back during the occupation of Center Space. A perfect candidate for crazy-time duty.

Herm. An androgyne whose only friends were machines. Strictly a hard-case crazy-time natural. We called it Herm, splitting the genders down the middle.

The Swede. Put all the nuts in Brazil together and the scene wouldn't be one-half so nutsy as this character. Came to space via the USO and Stanislavsky. A Dadaist, shadow boxer, lone dancer. A nut, in short.

Mortle was from a planet that looked like a candy-store jungle seen through green shades. Green emeralds and mint sunsets. He was some kind of anthropomorphic lizard with chronic nostalgia. Played a lute all night long (he didn't sleep) and reminisced about what for him was the equivalent of Mom's blueberry pie—namely, Mom's linear jam (ten flavors, no vanilla).

And then there was the boss, Captain Doud. He was tall enough to pick fruit without a ladder, silent as an Indian, and wore a full-dress uniform with all his medals, which were numerous: he had two Purple Hearts, the Cravate Noir, the Congressional Hand, a Silver Cinquefoil, and the Order of the Third Vision, that latter for perception above and beyond.

They put all five of us down from a cruiser, said they'd be back in five weeks and that they'd give us two weeks of salad time anywhere in the



charted Known from Bali to Betelgeuse.

"We knew we'd be ready by that time.

Well, in the beginning we did a lot of Crusoe numbers. Shipwrecked, in effect if not in actuality, we decided to explore and see what we could find. This little chunk of dross was a true island. But there wasn't anything except sand and rock to see. The sand was as fine as salt and the color of copper and bronze and teak and the rock was all as hard and dense as iron.

But one thing. The universe seen from the perspective of that orb was spectacular. It was Gerard Manley Hopkins's "The Starlight Night" in spades:

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!

O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!

The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!

Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the  
elves'-eyes!

The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!

I guess it's the sight of the stars that got me off the terra in the first place. All those scattered hot and icy bits and pieces of frozen and burning time turning in God's kaleidoscope. Well, there it was max. The spirit and soul of every gem in the universe lighted our sky. The first few nights there I dreamed of scimitars and ice and Tiffany's and Christmas and peacocks all night long.

What happened to us out there started after a couple of weeks. One day me and the lizard and Captain Doud were out in the dunes trying to get some action out of one of the divining rods included with the gimmickry. It was bright daylight and very cold, the work was tedium, and none of us were saying much, which was especially easy for Doud. We weren't getting any results from the rod either, which I'd already given a zero-minus rating on my data sheet although we still had another regimen or two to put it through. Anyway, at one point in the middle of the work Mortle stood up and gave me a look that made me do a freeze-frame finish in mid-motion. Doud was a few yards away writing on his

sheet.

"I don't know," Mortle said.

"Yeah?"

"Someone ..."

I edged a ridge of sweat off my brow with a hand and waited.

"... watching," he finished in a thin voice.

"Mortle," I said, and looked around us. "Huh?" "Being watched," he said. His eyes widened and he took a step. Do you remember Fred C. Dobbs from that classic movie, one of the standards in every station library—the one about the character with gold fever? *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*? Well, Mortle had that shifty Dobbs look and I'd never seen him look like anything more or less than a sunbalm lizard on a hot rock.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

He glanced at me with something approximating anger, then turned away and after a bit turned back and there was in his eyes something I did not care for. We finished what we were doing, but Mortle had become oddly detached, strangely uneasy. I watched him on the way back to the minimum. He looked over his shoulder occasionally, and now and then up.

At the sky.

The next unusual thing I recall was finding Herm outside a couple of nights later very late at night. Me, I'm an insomniac, but Herm and Morpheus might have been brothers. I'd never known Herm to miss any sleep. I'd stepped outside to have a cigarette and watch the lights and there was Herm standing alone and as still as a statue under all the chandeliers.

After a minute or so I went quickly up to it and stood beside it. "Cigarette?" I offered.

"No," Herm said. And added, "Don't light a match."

I didn't. I mouthed an unlit cigarette and looked at Herm.

"We're in a labyrinth," it said after some time. "A hall of mirrors."



"Yeah?"

"You jerk," it said softly without anger. "Do you like being watched?"

"Herm, what's the quip?" I asked.

It smiled to and for itself and moved away into the night.

At mess in the morning, over his hardtack, Mortle said speculatively to all and none of us, "How fast does light travel?"

"On its way to or from Pittsburgh?" the Swede chuckled, enjoying his own private joke.

"No, I mean how do they know 186,000 miles per second?"

"That's relativity," I put in. "Anybody here got physics?"

Nobody said anything.

"It's funny, you know," Mortle said with a vague little smile.

I looked over at him.

"They sell it on Earth."

That day all five of us worked together outside, Herm and Mortle bouncing bursts of laser candles off a force field (atomic pool, the Swede called it), the Swede, Doud, and I a couple of hundred yards away setting up a piece of junk that looked like a glockenspiel but was supposed to read the composition of the terrain below us up to five hundred feet. It was a good day's work and we got back to the minimum tired and cranky. I decided to take a shower because water's one thing we had plenty of—thanks to Hydrofax—in addition to tedium. I got into my Floridas and as I was going through the corridor to the latrine I noticed that the lights overhead were considerably dimmer. I checked out the bulbs and saw that they'd been changed. It was the same in the latrine. All of the brights had been replaced with dims. It made the atmosphere spectral, a little ominous.

Back in the rec room, where everyone had gathered for a game of mook, I asked nobody in particular, "Who changed the bulbs in the corridor?"

I found myself confronted by three blank stares and Mortle's lopsided smile. "They were too bright," he said defensively. "Okay?"

I shrugged. "They're kind of dim now."

"Oh?" Mortle said in a voice vibrant with restrained anger. "Well, is it okay?"

"By me," I said, and looked around the table. Nobody said a word and we played the game in moody silence. I was the mook.

A storm came out of somewhere the next morning and caught us strictly by surprise. Ninety-mile winds that picked up the desert sands and tossed them around like nutmeg in a blender. Watching from the windows, our interest was academic since we knew the station was durable enough to toss back a cyclone. We played Monopoly and I became a ruthless landlord but made a fatal mistake by passing up a chance to buy Boeing and ended up on the skids. Maybe it was just a coincidence, but I noticed that nobody bought the light works. None of them would touch it even though by the time the game ended there were only three unpurchased properties left.

The storm ranted itself out by late evening—soon enough so that we knew another day of work lay ahead.

The next morning I couldn't find my cigarette lighter, but I didn't think much of the incident. It would turn up later, I assumed.

That was the first day I noticed that everybody seemed to become just a little bit quirky as evening approached. Quirky. Vague, abstracted, inattentive, edgy.

That night I noticed that the Swede wore a sleep mask to bed. I dropped by his room as he was getting ready to turn in and he had the mask on but slanted up over his forehead. It was the kind of mask *Vogue* models wear to get their beauty sleep.

"Insomnia?" I asked, pointing it out.

"I dunno," he said off-handedly. "Made me a mask." He shrugged an elbow, changed the subject. "We working on the weather table tomorrow?"



# THE GREY LAWN'S COLD

We were, just the two of us. We ate breakfast early and were out in the desert when the sun was coming up. It was hard work, hot and exhausting. It involved a lot of lifting and carrying heavy parts. We'd drawn lots for the task and the Swede and I got it.

Sometime in the middle of the morning the Swede looked up at me and gave me a lazy smile. "Know what the stars are?" he asked out of the blue.

I paused before splicing a wire and gave him the kind of look you use to peer at something in a cage. "No, what?" I asked.

"They're confetti," he smiled. "Just great handfuls of *glacé* confetti left on the floor at the end of the Space and Time Ball. A sad sight. The sweepers will come soon."

"Yeah?" I spliced the wire. "You ought to send that to Mysterious Metaphor Monthly," I said. "Get paid."

"Up your purse!" he retorted with a furious grin and went back to his work, quietly and efficiently.

That night Mortle disappeared. When he didn't show up at the table we turned the minimum upside down looking for him but without success. He'd worked alone that day and he simply hadn't returned.

It was spooky, unprecedented. We kept expecting him but he didn't show up. So the next morning we went looking for him. We went our separate ways and spent the next twelve hours or so searching through the desert, but none of us had any luck. It was like trying to find a noodle in a haystack. There wasn't anything we could do then, but wait.

The next day we returned to the work schedule. Teams of two. I worked with the Swede on the weather table. We didn't talk much. I was worried and I knew it showed. He was opaque. I couldn't read him. There was something alien between us.

I woke that night very late and got up and went outside and stood out front smoking. The sky was drenched with frozen light. I must have stood there for five minutes before I saw the Swede a hundred yards or so out in the desert. It looked like he was dancing. He was moving from side to side in slow graceful dips and passing his arms through the air. Some strange ritualistic dance.

I went out there and walked up behind him very slowly and stopped. He heard me and turned around.

I didn't say anything. His face was bright in the cosmic light and there were two scintillas, tears, on his dark cheeks. "Fireflies," he explained.

Then I saw what he had been doing. He swooped again and reached toward the stars, reaching, his face avid with the glow of his eyes. "Fireflies..."

I got him to come back inside and hit him with a jolt of pentocaine. He was really a nut now. And I'm not talking about style. He was a pathological nut-

cake. I didn't think he'd be of any more use to us.

Doud and Herm and I had a conference and talked about what was happening. We put it all together.

"The stars," I said.

"I never heard of star fever," Doud said.

Herm just listened. He didn't want to talk.

We didn't work the next day. We went our own separate ways. I was very nervous and cautious as an Apache in everything I did. I went for a hike and looked for Mortle. No luck. I got back very late, just as the stars were beginning to appear in the sky. I hadn't taken any rations and my hunger for the moment was stronger than the discontent I'd been feeling all day. I went to the dining room but nobody was there. The rec room was empty. All of the rooms were.

I ate by myself and waited.

About midnight Doud came in. "Did it," he said triumphantly.

"Yeah?" I asked.

"C'mon," he beckoned. I followed him outside and across the open desert and finally to Herm. It was on the desert floor, wrapped in bright foil Doud had gotten from the supply room, a silverfoil mummy. Doud knelt down and peeled back the foil to show me Herm's face. There were dimes on his eyes.

"Nice," he said softly.

"Indeed," I said. "Very nice."

He folded the foil back over the grey face and stood up.

"How about some coffee?" I said. He was in some sort of daze and together we walked wordlessly back to the minimum. Where I slammed enough pentocaine in his backside to drowse an elephant.

I believe it was the singing that came first. I could hear the universe singing a lovely ethereal song. Like a kid on Christmas morning I went out and walked into the fields of light. The whole universe was burning, beautiful bonfires in endless dark, silver choruses singing through the flames.

I hadn't danced for so many months. Now a celestial orchestra, tuned just for me, began to play. And I danced like Alexandrov, splendid gliding turns and twists on the dark stage beneath the luminous suns. I wept as I danced and I danced all night by firelight, by candlelight, lamplight, until I was incandescent with energy and motion, ghosts of light applauded my performance, and I did encores on the radiant stage, sparks leaping from my fingertips.

The ship came chugging down a couple of weeks later to pick us up. They took us back and brought me to a closet. Deep-sixed me in darkness. Ravens nesting on my eyes. No light finds its way into this solemn room, but one of these days, soon, yes, I'm going out there again with tinsel on my shoulders and a thousand dimes and I want to spend a whole night pitching them into the silver well, which I will. I will. 17



# HEXES and HOAXES

## The Curious Career of Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*

by Robert M. Price

*Fantasy's most famous forbidden book never actually existed . . . until now!*

It is always dangerous for a writer of fiction to venture into literary criticism. Late readers cry, "Can you do better?" and then proceed to read the author's stories to see if he *did* do better.

H. P. Lovecraft, both critic and creator, left himself open to just this kind of scrutiny. In his celebrated survey *Supernatural Horror in Literature* he criticized the writers of gothic horror for the repetitious use they made of atmospheric props, including "mouldy hidden manuscripts."

Yet as millions of readers know, Lovecraft himself leaned heavily on the same device in his own horror fiction. He concocted a musty old tome of forbidden magic called the *Necronomicon* and employed it in a number of his tales. "No weird story can truly produce terror," he explained, "unless it is devised with all the care and verisimilitude of an actual hoax."

How convincingly did he carry off the hoax? Unusually well, it seems, for his *Necronomicon* has charmed and frightened readers for more than sixty years. Eventually, as we shall see, some of his imitators trivialized Lovecraft's book, reducing it to just another "mouldy manuscript," and in recent years a few enterprising souls have gone Lovecraft one better, actually offering copies of the *Necronomicon* for sale. We'll take a look at exactly what they're selling—but first let's see how Lovecraft came to invent his nonexistent book.

### SPAWN OF ALHAZRED

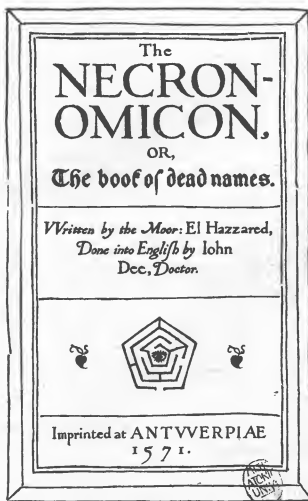
Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) was a scholarly, reclusive man who spent most of his life in his native Providence, Rhode Island. He saw himself as an eighteenth-century English gentleman born in the wrong time, and he found nourishment for his vivid imagination in the many old horror stories he was eventually to catalogue in his *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Learning from the mistakes of his literary ancestors, he developed very definite ideas as to just what made, or ought to make, a story frightening. He

felt that for people living in a scientific age, true horror depended upon the "suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space."

Such views might be expected from this true son of the eighteenth century, with its Newtonian worldview and mechanistic philosophy. Though Lovecraft held no brief for gods, ghosts, or spirits and scorned occultism as pure superstition, he saw that, for literary purposes, the occult supplied a means of introducing the

necessary note of extraterrestrial chaos. A book that was both ancient and secret—in short, a "mouldy, hidden manuscript"—was the perfect symbol for utterly alien truth, serving as a channel to those "daemons of unplumbed space."

A century earlier, Poe had headed some of his tales with fabricated quotes from "ancient" sources, thus invoking an atmosphere of hoary wisdom and soon-to-be-fulfilled prophecy. Similarly, the writer Robert W. Chambers quoted from a nonexistent play called *The King in Yellow* in his stories. In "The Yellow Sign," for example, the frightening and dubious reputation of the play attracts the protagonist like a moth to its pyre; he reads the text and collapses into a despondent madness. Thus the fantasy writer Lin Carter has suggested that HPL got the idea for his *Necronomicon* from Chambers. Another scholar, Donald R. Burleson, believes the roots of the *Necronomicon* lie buried in



# HEXES and HOAXES

Nathaniel Hawthorne, particularly in a passage from his notebooks concerning "an old volume in a large library, [which] every one [was] afraid to unclasp and open ... because it was said to be a book of magic." At any rate, it is certain Lovecraft learned from these writers that references to various "ancient" pseudo-sources could be quite effective in lending an air of verisimilitude to a tale of antique horror.

Lovecraft used this play in several ways. His tale "The Statement of Randolph Carter" alludes to an old manuscript written in some unidentifiable Oriental language known only to a certain occult adventurer, who follows its instructions on an expedition into an ancient mausoleum—and is killed by the thing that still lives in it. Another, more readable secret text appears in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, in which an old diary is discovered in a niche behind a wall. It proves to be the work of a long-dead sorcerer who's left it there for his descendant to use in calling the old necromancer back from the dead.

But Lovecraft's favorite rationale for a book's secrecy was neither arcane language nor a hiding place, but sheer suppression. A book of ancient lore could be so disturbing, frightening, or downright maddening that the authorities might try to ban or even burn it. This is true of Lovecraft's most ingenious creation, the *Necronomicon*. According to his stories, this legendary volume has been the object of so relentless a witch-hunt that only five copies survive to the present day. Lovecraft even tells his readers where to find them: under lock and key (i.e., don't waste your time looking) in the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Harvard's Widener Library, the library of Buenos Aires University, and the Miskatonic University Library in Arkham, Massachusetts. (Don't waste your time looking for Miskatonic, either—or for the mythical town of Arkham.) Other copies might surface now and then, but only after long and worldwide searching. Friends, this book is rare.

Of course, the thing that makes the *Necronomicon* rarest is that it existed solely in Lovecraft's imagination. He got the idea for the title from a first-century A.D. poem about the stars, the *Astronomicon* by Manilius. (As a boy, Lovecraft was an astronomy buff.) "Necronomicon" was supposedly meant "The Image of the Law of the Dead," but Lovecraft's Greek

was a bit spotty; according to Lovecraft scholar S. T. Joshi, the title actually means just "Concerning the Dead."

The author of this nonexistent book was said to be a "mad Arab" named Abdul Alhazred. In a letter to a friend, Lovecraft once admitted the real facts in the case of Alhazred. He had invented the name, he said, when he was five years old and under the spell of the *Arabian Nights*; fancying himself a devout Muslim, he had sought a name with a suitably exotic ring to it. It's likely that he derived "Alhazred" from "Hazard," the name of one branch of his family. The not-so-awful truth, then, was that the "mad Arab" was Lovecraft himself.

The first reference to Alhazred appears in 1921, when Lovecraft resurrected his childhood alias for a story called "The Nameless City." Alhazred receives a brief mention as an inspired poet who, centuries ago, dreamed of a buried desert city and, upon waking in a cold sweat, spontaneously sang:

"That is not dead which can  
eternal lie,

And with strange aeons even death  
may die."

The protagonist of the story, a modern archaeologist familiar with the legend of Alhazred, sets out to find the desert ruins and succeeds only too well, discovering just what it is that "lies eternally" in the buried city: he has stumbled upon the underground refuge of a race of intelligent lizard-creatures who, centuries before, had fled the coming of man. He races from the crypt, leaving sanity behind.

Lovecraft reemployed his fictitious alter-ego the very next year in "The Hound," in which Alhazred is mentioned for the first time as the author of the *Necronomicon*. In this story, a couple of grave-robbing pervers discover a sphinxlike amulet in a coffin they have violated. They recognize it as the talisman of (hold on to your lunch) the "corpse-eating cult of inaccessible Leng," which was "hinted of in the forbidden *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred." What Alhazred didn't say was that the skeletal owner of the amulet would not take this theft lying down. The two grave-robbers soon find themselves haunted by the distant baying of a hound, who proves to be the decaying inhabitant of the crypt. He finally tears one of the duo to ribbons and drives the other mad—as if he were sane to begin with!

The following year, 1923, Lovecraft wrote "The Festival," an effectively eerie tale wherein the narrator makes the mistake of returning to "Kingsport" (a fictionalized Marblehead, Massachusetts), the musty old town of his forebears, where he will join in some kind of Yule festival. When he finds out just *what* kind, it is too late. It seems that the Kingsport kin are horrid wormlike creatures possessed by the souls of the narrator's departed ancestors, and are only masquerading as humans. An unheeded hint of the slimy truth has been glimpsed earlier in the story when the hero scans a copy of the *Necronomicon*. Here Lovecraft provides the first of the handful of "quotations" he was to write:

The nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live new and oddly bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head.... For it is of old rumor that the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from this charnel clay, but fats [sic] and instructs the very worm that gnaws; till out of corruption horrid life springs.... Great holes secretly are dugged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl.

In 1926, Lovecraft wrote one of his major and, by all accounts, best pieces of fiction, "The Call of Cthulhu." The story is told in the form of a dossier of documents which, when pieced together, foretell the imminent rising of the primeval monster Cthulhu from his watery grave. This tale may be said to have inaugurated the now famous "Cthulhu Mythos," a cycle of stories by Lovecraft and his imitators describing the attempts of long-banished behemoths called the "Great Old Ones" to invade and subdue the earth. In most of the subsequent stories in this cycle, the *Necronomicon* is made the bible of the degenerate sects that worship the Old Ones. But bear in mind that Lovecraft invented the *Necronomicon* well before he begat Cthulhu. Alhazred has no connection with the Cthulhu Mythos in "The Nameless City," "The Hound," or "The Festival," and even in the fountainhead Mythos tale, "The Call of Cthulhu," the connection is pretty tenuous. There we read again the ominous couplet that first appeared in "The Nameless City," and for the first time the poem is at-



H.P. Lovecraft, the only true author of the *Necronomicon*, in 1934.

Photo by Robert H. Borlow

tributed to the *Necronomicon*, which, the story implies, is a generalized collection of curiosities, one of many such books that circulated during the Middle Ages—analogous, perhaps, to *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus*, a compendium of lore regarding astrology, the imagined properties of roots, herbs, and precious stones, and various other oddities. The narrator merely states that the worshippers of Cthulhu read into the poem a link to their god.

In a novelette written early in 1927, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, the sorcerer Joseph Curwen speaks of a whole chapter in the *Necronomicon* which gives instructions for raising the dead. Later that year Lovecraft came out with a "History of the *Necronomicon*," an imaginative tongue-in-cheek essay, written for his friends, which reads like an article from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Here we learn that the fictional Alhazred wrote his book of black magic in Damascus in 730 A.D. He called it *Al-Azif*, which meant "the buzzing"—that is, the chirping of insects heard in the night wind, a sound that was supposed to signify the whispering of demons. According to Lovecraft, the more familiar title *Necronomicon* was added in Greek translation. Lovecraft also cites one Ibn Khallikan, the twelfth-century Muslim historian, to the effect that the mad Arab only made a show of Islamic orthodoxy, privately "worshipping unknown Entities who[m] he called Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu." We are, in fact, given to understand that Alhazred sold his soul for the knowledge recorded in his legendary book. Retribution came for the mad Arab in 738 A.D., when,

Lovecraft tells us, he was torn to pieces by an invisible monster. (By the way, though Ibn Khallikan's works are still extant, any reference in them to one "Abdul Alhazred" has thus far eluded scholars!)

In "The Dunwich Horror" (1928) the *Necronomicon* is, for the first time, explicitly tied to the Cthulhu Mythos. For this story, Lovecraft composed his longest and most memorable "excerpt." Here is part of it:

Nor is it to be thought that man is either the oldest or the last of earth's masters.... The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be.... They walk serene and primal, undiminished and to us unseen. Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again.... They walk un-

seen and foul in lonely places where the Words have been spoken and the Rites howled through at their Seasons.... Great Cthulhu is Their cousin, yet can he spy Them only dimly.

There are several interesting things in this passage, not the least of which is that the devil-gods Yog-Sothoth and Cthulhu, two of Lovecraft's major creations, are clearly differentiated from the transcendent "Old Ones," that alien race which ruled Earth some eons ago and now seeks to regain its lost mastery. Cthulhu and Yog-Sothoth appear to be inferior servants of the Old Ones. (This distinction has been blurred by nearly every subsequent Cthulhu Mythos writer.) "The Dunwich Horror" itself concerns the efforts of "Old Man Whateley," a backwoods wizard, to open the way for the Old Ones to return to Earth. By chanting incantations from the *Necronomicon*, he calls Yog-Sothoth, the sentinel of the Old Ones, down from the sky. This interdimensional monster impregnates the sorcerer's daughter, whose half-human, half-demon offspring, Wilbur Whateley, is to prepare for the anticipated cosmic rampage of evil. Dr. Henry Armitage, a professor from nearby Miskatonic University, becomes aware of the plan. Reading the *Necronomicon*, he finds a formula which enables him to banish the virgin-born son of Yog-Sothoth back to the void. Like all good magic books, the *Necronomicon* apparently supplied the means to exorcise the demons it helped summon, in case things got out of hand.

The book also turns up in three of his later tales: "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1930), the novella-length *At the Mountains of Madness* (1931), and "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (adapted from E. Hoffman Price's "The Lord of Illusion" in 1932-33). Lovecraft at last puts his cards on the table, for in these stories man's cozy sense of security, his sense of "at-homeness" in an ordered universe, is smashed not by magic but by naturalistic science. It becomes clear that magic just extends the illusion that the world is rationally ordered, since it implies that "supernature," as well as nature, is governed by laws. "The Whisperer in Darkness" is about a man whose brain has been kidnapped and preserved alive for study by aliens from other dimensions. *At the Mountains of Madness* depicts an archaeological expedition to Antarctica which discovers the relics of an extraterrestrial race, a race that was



# NECRONOMICON

## The Necronomicon

The book of dead names

Edited by George H. Brown  
Introduction by Colin Wilson  
Revised by  
Robert Turner and David Langford

Two Necronomicons: the 1980 Avon edition  
and the 1978 Neville Spearman edition.

highly advanced when man was but a twinkle in the eyes of the apes. In "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," an adventurer explores the transcendental states of consciousness and eventually loses his individuality. Technically, these stories would have to be labeled science fiction. In them science, not the occult, threatens our illusion of security—so what role has the *Necronomicon* here?

Lovecraft uses the book to demythologize his own Cthulhu Mythos. His protagonists have all read the *Necronomicon* and are forced to conclude that its gods were merely primitive allegories for the true horrors of science: other dimensions, prehuman civilizations, altered states of consciousness. We learn that the advanced extraterrestrials in Antarctica "were above all doubt the originals of the fiendish elder myths which ... the *Necronomicon* hint[s] about. They were the great 'Old Ones.'" In "The Whisperer in Darkness," the really terrible revelation is that of "the monstrous nuclear chaos beyond angled space which the *Necronomicon* had mercifully cloaked under the name of Azathoth." And that state of undifferentiated consciousness beyond the gates of the Silver Key "was perhaps that which certain secret cults of Earth has whispered of as Yog-Sothoth." Taken literally, then, the demons of the *Necronomicon* are seen as tame myths compared with the disorienting revelations of science. The real horror is that of "a sense-chained race of inquirers on a microscopic earth-dot ... faced with the black, unfathomable gulf of the Outside ... and its virtually certain sprinkling of utterly unknown life-forms"—or so Lovecraft wrote in a letter to Frank Belknap Long.

As a literary device, then, the *Necronomicon* enjoyed a remarkable evolution. It began as little more than an effective prop for horror stories. Later it functioned as a metaphor for threatening knowledge of the chaos beyond our world. Finally it was swept

aside so that the reader, no longer shielded by metaphors, could look that horror full in the face.

### FEARFUL LEGACY

Any good writer is liable to attract imitators, and some of these will be more talented than others. But Lovecraft seems to have opened Pandora's Box when he encouraged his pen-pals and admirers to try their hands at writing Cthulhu stories of their own. Of course, some of these writers had real ability, and their work is ideal for anyone who's devoured Lovecraft's fiction and is still hungry for more. But others have threatened to obscure HPL's achievement by embroidering it with second-rate pastiches. Lovecraft's disciples—the Judases as well as the Peters—form the next stage in the growth of the *Necronomicon* legend; and it's not hard to feel that, like the unearthly changeling Wilbur Whateley in "The Dunwich Horror," HPL's brainchild grew almost too rapidly, turning at length into something of a monster.

One of the most gifted of Lovecraft's associates was the California writer and artist Clark Ashton Smith. The two never met face to face, but they carried on a lengthy correspondence. Lovecraft first wrote to Smith after seeing some of his drawings, which impressed him greatly; as far as he was concerned, Smith was the "master of ghoulish worlds no other foot ever trod." The *Necronomicon* makes a brief appearance in two of Smith's fantasy tales. "The Nameless Offspring" opens with a supposed quotation from Alhazred:

Many and multimorph are the dim horrors of Earth, infesting her ways from the prime. They sleep beneath the unturned stone; they rise with the tree from its root; they move beneath the sea and in subterranean places ... They emerge betimes from the shotten sepulchre of haughty bronze and the low grave that is sealed with clay ... It is that spawn which the hidden dweller in the vaults has begotten upon mortality.

In other words, beware of ghouls! The story concerns the product of an unholy union consummated between a ghoulish and a cateleptic woman who is the victim of a "premature burial."

In "The Return of the Sorcerer," Smith depicts the revenge of a deceased wizard upon his foe: the wizard sends his finger bones back from the grave to strangle his old enemy. Once again, the story is prefaced by a passage from the *Necronomicon* intimating what will

happen. The style of both of Smith's "excerpts" from the book is good, and in keeping with the precedent set by Lovecraft. Interestingly, neither has a thing to do with the Cthulhu Mythos. It would be fair to say that Clark Ashton Smith had returned to Lovecraft's earliest conception of the *Necronomicon* as simply an effective piece of stage-setting for a weird tale.

A later writer who received inspiration from Lovecraft but incarnated that spirit in his own distinct fashion was the British writer Colin Wilson. A critical piece of Wilson's, *The Strength to Dream*, had come to the attention of August Derleth, a Lovecraft disciple who, with Donald Wandrei, founded the publishing firm Arkham House after HPL's death in order to preserve his work in hardcover. Naturally zealous to defend the master's reputation, Derleth bristled at what he considered (probably rightly) to be cheap shots taken by Wilson at Lovecraft's work. Derleth wrote to Wilson asking, in effect, "Can you do better?" and suggesting that the Englishman try his hand at a Lovecraftian story. Taking it as a friendly challenge, Wilson eventually wrote three Cthulhu Mythos tales, *The Mind Parasites*, "The Return of the Lloigor," and *The Philosopher's Stone*.

Wilson is far more optimistic about the human lot than Lovecraft was. In his hands the *Necronomicon* turns out to be an ancient compendium of advanced science instead of a fatalistic portent of humanity's doom. The book functions as a sign of human hope and potential; its "forbidden knowledge" is a clue to solving the perennial problems of the human race.

But many of HPL's disciples have tended to trivialize the *Necronomicon*, reducing it to the predictable "mouldy hidden manuscript" the master so deplored. The blasphemous book of Alhazred has come to be seen as such an indispensable prop for Mythos stories that it keeps cropping up in virtually every one of them. Every sorcerer has to have a copy. There are only supposed to be a handful in existence, and most are under lock and key, yet the *Necronomicon* appears in so many stories that one might almost expect to find the book in Barnes & Noble.

Some Lovecraftian imitators have tried to give the *Necronomicon* a rest by inventing their own eldritch tomes. Probably the most effective of these was the *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*

("Unspeakeable Cults") of the imaginary folklorist Von Junzt. The work was invented by Robert E. Howard, the famous creator of Conan the Cimmerian. Howard notes that only volume one is now extant: it seems that a colleague of Von Junzt's read the manuscript of a proposed second volume, then burned the pages and slit his wrists.

Another passable imitation was Robert Bloch's creation *De Vermis Mysteriis* ("Mysteries of the Worm") by the Flemish wizard Ludvig Prinn. This book was introduced in Bloch's "The Shambler from the Stars," a good-natured parody of his friend Lovecraft's stories. Incidentally, *De Vermis Mysteriis* is made the centerpiece of Stephen King's short story "Jerusalem's Lot," one of the best Lovecraft pastiches to date.

Obviously these imaginary books were homages to Alhazred's original. Lovecraft himself played the game, citing these books in his own stories. With the bad example thus set, how could anyone expect his followers to exercise restraint? What followed was a flood of "unique" volumes of "secret" lore, including Bloch's *Cultes de Goules* and Derleth's *Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus*, Ramsey Campbell's *Revelations of Glaaki*, Brian Lumley's *Cithaet Aquadrings*, Lin Carter's *Ponape Scripture* and *Zanthu Tablets*, Martin S. Warnes's *Black Tome of Also-phocus*, and a whole shelf more. The effect was inflationary, and the awesome secrecy which had enshrined the Cthulhu cult in Lovecraft's tales was completely dispelled.

Of course, the real solution to the problem was to let well enough alone and stop writing Lovecraft pastiches. Some writers in the tradition did see the need for pursuing new directions; Robert Bloch and Ramsey Campbell, for example, cut their teeth on Cthulhoid fiction and then moved on. But others were shortsighted. August

Derleth simply tried to elaborate the Mythos in a long list of stories based on plot-hints left behind in Lovecraft's notebooks. (Most of these stories were collected in book form as *The Mask of Cthulhu*, *The Trail of Cthulhu*, *The Survivor and Others*, and *The Lurker at the Threshold*, and more recently in the omnibus *The Watchers Out of Time*.) His work only tended to

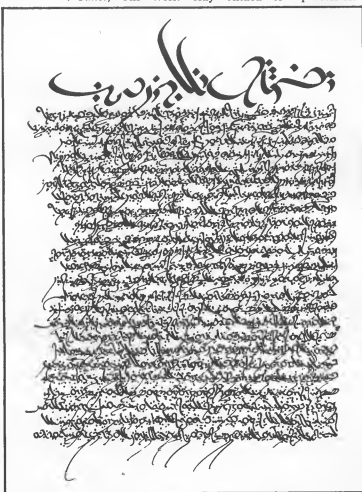
of Fire, just like God in the Book of Exodus. Derleth justified his conception with a quotation from Lovecraft: "All my stories ... are based on the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again." How-

ever, Lovecraft scholar Dirk Mosig has shown in his essay "H. P. Lovecraft — Myth-Maker" that HPL never wrote those words, and that the statement is actually an apocryphal product of Derleth's faulty memory. It is in fact Derleth's stories, not Lovecraft's, that the quote describes. His Alhazred confidently predicts that, though the Old Ones will make a new bid for power, the Elder Gods will certainly destroy them. Such optimism is totally inconsistent with true Lovecraftian horror; Derleth's stories tend to build toward an ominous climax, but instead the good guys always wind up winning.

Perhaps symptomatic of this failure of nerve is the flat tone of Derleth's passages from the *Necronomicon*. The eerie poetic style of Alhazred as "quoted" by Lovecraft and Smith is completely absent. Where these writers made the horror of the *Necronomicon* lie more in what it suggested than in what it said, Derleth's texts are painfully overexplicit.

They read like a crammed-in catalogue of the growing zoo of Old Ones, where and why they are imprisoned, who's serving time for what, et cetera. Nothing is left to the reader's imagination. Here is a brief sample from *The Lurker at the Threshold*:

Great Cthulhu shall rise from R'lyeh; Hastur, who is Him Who is Not To Be Named [but who is named anyway], shall come again from the dark star. ...; Shub-Niggurath, who is the Black Goat with a Thousand Young, shall have dominion over all wood nymphs, satyrs, lepre-



One of Abdul Alhazred's more eloquent passages, reproduced in the Neville Spearman edition.

trivialize the Cthulhu Mythos even further, for he insisted on putting the text within a familiar (and more hopeful) Judeo-Christian framework: now Abdul Alhazred opposes the satanic Old Ones and is in the service of a new group of benevolent deities, the "Elder Gods." Whereas Lovecraft had pictured Cthulhu and the Old Ones as simply asleep or far away in other dimensions, Derleth accounts for their absence from the scene by making them into "fallen angels," banished and imprisoned by the superior Elder Gods. The latter are even described as Pillars

# HEXES and HOAXES

chauns, and the Little People....

All are alike ye Children of ye Elder Gods, but ye Great Race of Yith and ye Great Old Ones failing to agree with one another, and both with ye Elder Gods, separated, leaving ye Great Old Ones in possession of ye Earth, while the Great Race, returning from Yith took up their Abode forward in Time in Earth-land... [etc., etc.]

Lovecraft never felt up to the challenge of showing the reader the actual contents of the *Necronomicon*, beyond a brief glimpse here and there. After all, the whole point of the book was that none of us could write it; it was a revelation of horrors beyond the imagination. And that's saying something, since Lovecraft's imagination was pretty considerable. Sad to say, some writers with less imagination have also shown less humility than Lovecraft at this point. Mercifully, August Derleth was content to leave us relatively few passages—two or three pages at the most. Not so Lin Carter, a fantastically prolific fantasist, editor, and critic, whose fiction is for the most part a collection of pastiches of Robert E. Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Lester (Doc Savage) Dent, Clark Ashton Smith, J.R.R. Tolkien, and, inevitably, H.P. Lovecraft.

Of his Cthulhu Mythos tales, the worst are undoubtedly two short pieces which purport to be chapters of the *Necronomicon*. They are in effect adventures of Abdul Alhazred, who is made into a kind of occult Sinbad. Though obviously rather far removed from Lovecraft's concept, this is an interesting idea. Handled well, a novelization of the *Necronomicon* as an occult epic might be pretty entertaining. But these stories are so lamely written that one seriously wonders if they were not first intended as satires.

In the first story, "The Doom of Yakhthob," Alhazred relates how his old mentor Yakhthob reluctantly agrees to call up a particularly fierce devil, apparently just to satisfy his students' curiosity. But he will do so only if Abdul's fellow student Ibn Ghazoul will go to Babylon and fetch a rare elixir to placate the monster, who is evidently something of a gourmet. Ibn Ghazoul returns from his errand, and the ritual is enacted. The creature appears, drains the flagon, and proceeds to use the soul of Yakhthob as a chaser. What went wrong? That shifty sorcerer's apprentice Ibn Ghazoul has spent the master's gold on wine, women, and song en route. He has filled the flagon with mere wine,

hoping the demon wouldn't notice. Of course, he has underestimated the monster's palate, and Yakhthob has the devil to pay. Alhazred flees for his life, and Ibn Ghazoul is nowhere to be found! The most horrifying thing about this ending is that it implies we can expect to see more adventures of Alhazred, in which Ibn Ghazoul will return to plague him.

Alhazred's antagonist, however, is absent from the next installment, "The City of Pillars." But then, so is any plot. Our hero recounts how he and his disciples once journeyed to Irem, the City of Pillars, to call forth one of the Great Old Ones. They do, it works, they flee. That's it. In Carter's hands, then, the *Necronomicon* has become a cliff-hanger serial with no cliffs.

## MASS-MARKET MAGIC

As we noted above, Lovecraft thought that in order for a story to be convincingly horrific, its teller had to use all his wiles, just as if he were actually trying to pull off a hoax. Ironically, HPL's efforts worked too well. Even in his day, many fans were sure that the *Necronomicon* really existed.

They wrote to *Weird Tales*, the pulp magazine in which most of Lovecraft's work appeared, and pleaded that the book be reprinted! Others, who got the joke, proceeded to have some fun with it, placing phony ads for the *Necronomicon* in book trade journals and filling false card-catalogue entries for it in their local libraries. As a tribute to Lovecraft, a dummy copy was even displayed in a glass case in the Brown University library, which contains an extensive collection of HPL's letters, papers, and manuscripts. Back in the 1950s, a couple of people even tried their hand at writing the infernal volume. August Derleth had the dubious privilege of reading these versions and was disappointed to discover their utter lack of imagination. All the would-be Alhazreds had done was to rehash incantations from *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* and other boring magical cook-

books, sprinkling in "Cthulhu" or "Azathoth" here and there.

In 1966 and '67 a magazine called *Anubis* printed a few pages allegedly copied from the *Necronomicon*. (These were reprinted in *Heavy Metal's* October 1979 Lovecraft issue.) Some pages featured intriguing diagrams which seemed to trace the evolution of a fishlike creature into a man. If any readers really wanted to be taken in by this joke, they could do so, but it wouldn't be the fault of the publisher. A note reveals that the material has been "rendered into English by Hannes Bok and Bonnes Hack, with new material by Captain Kangaroo."

In 1973, fantasy writer and Lovecraft biographer L. Sprague De Camp released a book called *Al-Azif* through Owlswick Press. It opens with a disclaimer: "In view of the sinister and dubious reputation of this work, the publishers'... warrant neither the accuracy nor the authenticity of the matter published herewith." De Camp relates how he smuggled the manuscript out of Iraq, and offers the text untranslated, noting that the scholar who



Swiss artist H.R. Giger used HPL's title for his book of surreal artwork.

tried to translate it wound up splattered all over the walls of his study! However, it's going to take more than a translator to figure this one out. It seems that the nearly two hundred pages of foreign script are actually the same text over and over again. Someone has drawn up some beautiful calligraphy, then sliced it into strips, repasted it, and photographed it in many different combinations.

Five years later, George Hay and Colin Wilson gave us *The Necronomicon*, the *Book of Dead Names*, published by Neville Spearman (Corgi paperback, 1980). The book opens with a wink to the reader. It is dedicated to "men and women ... who ... can see the false in the true and the true in the false." Anyone who had read Colin Wilson's story "The Return of the Lloigor" may experience a flash of *déjà vu* as he reads through the introduction to *The Book of Dead Names*. In the latter, it says that this version of the *Necronomicon* is the result of deciphering the *Liber Logaeth*, an old text written in the form of a cryptogram by the Elizabethan astrologer John Dee. Before they hit upon the right key to the puzzle, the dauntless researchers used microscopic, ultraviolet, and infrared photography on the manuscript, hoping to detect any traces of letters which might have faded over the centuries.

Strangely enough, this is exactly the same process used in "The Return of the Lloigor" to decipher the enigmatic "Voynich Manuscript," a coded text which, in the Wilson tale, has baffled cryptographers for generations. Special infrared photography restores the lost letters, and the manuscript turns out to be—guess what. Unfortunately, the text of the Hay-Wilson collaboration is not as interesting as the earlier story. Most of *The Book of Dead Names* merely tells the reader how to summon the Great Old Ones and cajole them into granting favors. As Merlin says in the movie *Excalibur*, it is all "potions and petty evil."

So far, all of our Raiders of the Lost *Necronomicon* have pulled their pranks in innocent fun, for the two works we've discussed were merely meant to satisfy the yen of Lovecraft fans (the present writer included!) to have on their bookshelves a volume with the word "Necronomicon" on the binding. But this may not be the case with *The Necronomicon* brought out by Schlangekraft and Barnes Graphics in 1977 and by Avon, in paper-

back, in 1980. Edited by "Simon," a self-proclaimed warlock from New York City, this book is no less a fake than the others, but Simon seems to want it taken seriously. It is intended for real occult rituals; the author even teaches classes on how to use it. The volume begins with an escape clause.

Let us hasten to state at this point that the original manuscript is neither the property of the Editor, nor the Publishers. We were given the right to translate and publish this work ... but not the right to hold the manuscript up to public inspection .... Therefore as a matter of policy, we cannot honor any requests to see the *NECRONOMICON* in its original state.

It also places Alhazred (whom it refers to simply as "the Mad Arab") in the wrong historical context. Instead of a Muslim, he is made into a worshipper of the Sumerian-Babylonian gods Marduk and Anu. "Azathoth" is taken to mean Azag (Babylonian for "enchanter") plus "Thoth," the god of magic. Unfortunately, "Thoth" is an interloper from the wrong mythology. He is Egyptian.

Most of Simon's *Necronomicon* is occupied with diagrams and rituals. From a literary standpoint, the most interesting section is the two-part "Testimony of the Mad Arab" which opens and concludes the text. It is well written, conveying more of the authentic flavor of an ancient first-person narrative than do Lin Carter's admitted fictions (though at one point Simon has the Mad Arab recall seeing a priest of Cthulhu melt into a pool of slime, a little too much like the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*). However, the book lacks the nightmarish tone a good *Necronomicon* ought to have. "Recite thine [sic: it should be 'thy'] thanks-

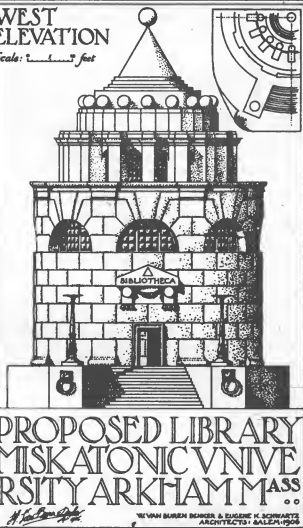
giving to the Gods upon thine altar, strike the Sword of the Watcher that It may depart, and give the incantation of Inanna which says how she conquered the realm of the Underworld and vanquisheth KUTULU." Is this the book that drove its readers mad?

Looking back at our literary journey, its course has wound through some surprising byways, alleys, and detours. When H.P. Lovecraft wrote his "History of the *Necronomicon*" in 1927, he could never have guessed that the most amazing parts of its history still lay in the future. It is ironic that Lovecraft, an avowed and confirmed skeptic, has become a favorite of the occultists, and that his fictitious book of sorcery has been pressed into service as a guidebook for the gullible and superstitious. Even more ironically, the *Necronomicon*, which was originally conceived as forbidden, suppressed, and nearly impossible to obtain, has now become a mass-market paperback!

Perhaps it was some clairvoyant vision of this future that drove Alhazred mad.

## WEST ELEVATION

Scale: 1 inch = 10 feet



The Miskatonic University Library: an early view.

"Is he really that good?" she asked.  
He tugged her hand to get her to go faster.  
"Yeah, the Man's that good. You don't hafta believe me. After all, you're about to see for yourself."

"I keep hearing how great he is. I mean, his records are really fine, but—"

"Records ain't the real thing, Shirl. He's so goddamn good it'll blow you away."

"I know this band's good."

"They're better than good. Come on, you'll see."

The girl wore a thin t-shirt and a windbreaker. The boy's jacket was leather. The clothes were tight over their lean bodies. When they reached the entrance to the gym, a burly guy stood in their way.

"Tickets."

"Yeah." The boy produced two stubs. They passed through to the security gauntlet.

"Let's see the purse," one guard said.

"Go to hell," Shirl said.

He grabbed the bag from her.

"Give it back!" she cried. "Hey, Larry, get it from him." Larry reached for it, but missed. The guard stepped behind the table.

"Either I look or you don't get in. What'll it be?"

Larry snapped, "Make it fast. We got people to meet." The man took his time with the purse, found nothing, and gave it back.

"Now was that so bad?" The guard grinned at Shirl, showing his teeth. She stepped back and let go some spit. It hit his chest. He jumped at her, but she and Larry darted into the crowd. Behind them the guard ripped the purse from the next girl's hands.

Larry laughed. "What a sonofabitch. He looked good with spit on him."

Shirl pulled the homemade false bottom from her purse and got out the whiskey and a tiny vial. They drank, then faded into a corner under the bleachers and had a toot of coke.

As they came out a voice shouted: "Hey, Larry!" Larry saw G. Willy approaching. G. Willy's eyes were on Shirl. She didn't like it.

"Yeah, G. Willy," Larry muttered. Shirl's face was contemptuous.

"Goin' out with this guy, huh?" G. Willy said.

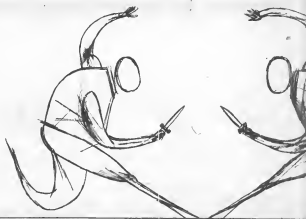
"Is it any of your business?"

"Just want to know the gossip, girl."

"Whaddya want?" Larry demanded.

"Not a damn thing, boy, 'cept I thought you oughta know your girl's got clap." A grin spread over his lips. Larry went for him. G. Willy spun, and they fell to the floor punching. G. Willy groped in his pocket for his knife, but a security man appeared and pulled the two apart. He swatted G. Willy with a sharp blow to the head and poked Larry with his stick.

"I'm sick o' you punks," he grunted. "Try this again and I'll make it hurt." G. Willy ran. "Yeah, you heard me," the guard yelled. As he turned to other business, Larry and Shirl scrambled over a



# LEADER of the BAND

By PETER HEYRMAN

row of chairs and headed for the front of the hall.

"Goddamn bastards," Larry grunted.

"You shouldn'ta jumped him, Larry. You almost got the liquor taken away. How much did you toot, anyway?"

"Not enough."

"Where's the best place to sit?"

"As close as we can. Maybe the Man'll jump in to the crowd. I've seen him do it."

They found a couple of seats in the fifth row, then sucked whiskey while they waited for the show to start. Soon the pint was empty. A marijuana haze formed in the rafters above them as the auditorium filled.

"When's he coming on?"

"We were early, Shirl."

"Yeah, but we been here awhile."

"He'll be on soon enough."



*He was a rock star, a warrior—  
and for the time being, a god.*



The crowd jeered as technicians wandered across the stage. A grease-headed kid threw a bottle at one of them. Two guards grabbed him. As they dragged him out he started kicking. One of the guards slammed his head against the floor, and he went limp as they carried him out. The technicians left. The stage darkened.

Suddenly an irised spotlight hit the microphone. A hand was resting on the mike. There were screams, Shirl's among them.

"Shuddup," Larry snarled. The whole auditorium fell silent.

The hand ripped the mike from the stand, and the light beam broadened. It was the Man. He stood alone, as a solitary saxophone cut the darkness.

And then the Man sang. His voice had a wild beauty, words and music building into a crazy street terror. His songs were woven from fire escapes, back

alleys, and switchblades. Pimps, whores, cops, and punks lived in the lyrics. The Man stroked his audience for all they were worth. They were his. When he smiled a glinting smile, they took the hint. When he cried and buried his head in his hands, they fell apart with him.

The audience reached out for the Man, wanting to swallow him into their midst. A line of meaty guards had to stem the surging crowd as the band stood defiantly behind them. The Man smiled through smoky air. Applause at the end of a song would die slowly, and the next song would grow out of the crowd's sound.

As a new song began, Larry whispered, "This is the peak."

"Quiet," Shirl hissed. Her eyes were on the Man. Larry shot her a jealous glance.

The song was a fight that could be felt all over the hall. Hot blood ran in jumpy veins. The Man took them into the alleys and made everyone take sides. The song stilled. Lights faded until the only light was on the Man. Then another spotlight hit the front of the center aisle. The Man jumped down into that circle of light. It was his call.

The answer came fast. A young man vaulted the security line and landed in the light facing the Man. In a quick motion this usurper had a switchblade in his hand. He threw off his jacket, revealing a striped t-shirt identical to the Man's. The Man drew his own knife, and the two began to dance. Their feet whispered across the floor. The usurper stabbed, but the Man dodged; then the ballet began again. The Man sidestepped and tried to cut his opponent, but just missed. The usurper's knife thrust forward, cutting meat, and blood spilled to the floor. The Man staggered, hit the floor. The leader of the band was motionless. The crowd remembered to breathe, then looked. There was a new Man.

He picked the microphone from the floor. The saxophone wailed. The song began again. His voice filled the night, and the song ended in a blast like none ever heard. It brought down the house. The audience was too drained to call the Man back for an encore. Their applause slowly disintegrated, and they shuffled numbly off to cars and cycles. Soon they were streaming back into the streets where their fantasies lived.

After they got in the car Larry and Shirl were silent for a moment, then Larry hit the ignition and peeled out to the road. He sped crazily for the country. When he found a dark, lonely spot he pulled over and turned off his machine. He reached for Shirl, and she for him. After a few minutes they separated and lay their heads back. They were tired and sweating as they stared into the darkness.

"It was great," she breathed.

"Yeah."

"Is he always that good?"

Larry smiled. "He gets better every time."

# PUMPKIN

(continued from page 31)

was too startled to move. Then the lightning flashed again and I looked up over my shoulder.

"Jed Holloway was standing there at the edge of the woods, and he *was* the lightning. It was playing all around his body like green fire, playing around his hair and beard and his little, red pig eyes. Only it wasn't just around—the lightning seemed to be coming *from* his eyes. Then he opened his mouth and the thunder boomed right out of his throat.

"I let go of the outhouse and it dropped back into place on its foundation. At least I think it did, but I didn't wait to see. I turned and ran and the lightning followed me, stabbing into the ground at my heels. I swear one bolt came so close it grazed the hairs on my neck.

"The next thing I remember was blubbing in my bed, with Uncle George and Aunt Louise trying to calm me down. Of course they didn't believe what I told them. They even dragged me over to the bedroom window so I could look for myself. By this time the storm was howling and the rain kept coming down in buckets, but I saw that the old farmhouse was completely dark and Jed Holloway had disappeared.

"They tried to tell me he'd never been there, that it was all just my imagination, but I knew better. And when they realized I wouldn't go outside to take the school bus the next day or the day after, they finally decided to pack me up and ship me back to my mother in town." David forced a smile. "So that's the way it was."

"Was," Vera said. "Not *is*." She met his gaze. "Look, David, I understand, really I do. Living with that traumatic experience bottled up inside you all these years must have been a terrible thing. But it's over now and you've got to realize that. You're not a kid anymore, and Jed Holloway is long dead and gone."

She rose briskly, glancing at her watch. "Look at the time! We'd better get to bed."

David's hand curled around the bottle. "I'll be up later."

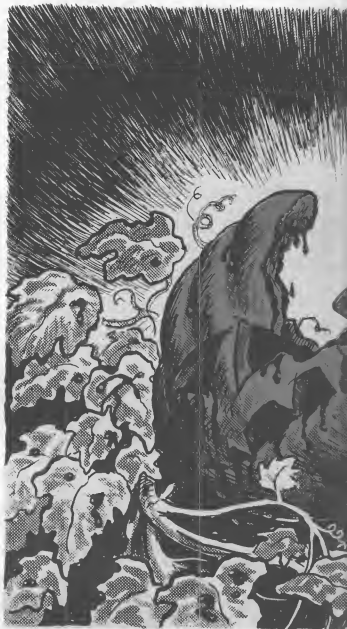
Vera hesitated. "Sure you don't want me to sit with you a while longer?"

"Of course not. I'll be all right now that I've gotten this out of my system. Thanks for being such a good psychiatrist."

"Come up soon," Vera smiled. "I may be able to offer you another kind of therapy."

Vera's smile faded quickly once she got upstairs. She'd done her best not to let David see how his story had disturbed her — not what he said, but the way he said it. Maybe telling all this would really help him; she hoped so.

Of course there was nothing to be alarmed about, but just the same she looked in on Billy before going on to the other bedroom. He was sound asleep.



That relieved her, and by the time she'd undressed and slid under the covers the tension began to ease. Now, if only David would come up —

The grandfather's clock tolled the hours in the hall. Windows rattled in reply, and somewhere a door groaned on rusty hinges. Vera snuggled back against her pillow, fighting a sudden childish impulse to bury her head beneath it.

No wonder David had a hang-up about returning here. To a small boy, suddenly being torn away from his home and family was a disturbing experience; living here in this lonely old house must have been an ordeal for him.

Vera sighed, shifting her head on the pillow. Thank heaven Billy didn't seem to have that problem —

"Mommy!"

Vera levered upright in sudden shock, alarm propelling her out of bed and into the hall.



"Mommy—"

The shrill cry rose again as she raced into Billy's room. Crouching amidst the tangled covers he turned to her, eyes alive with terror. Vera sank to the side of the bed and he buried his contorted face against her breast.

"There now, it's all right." Her fingers smoothed tousel hair, soothed trembling shoulders.

"That's better," she said. "What happened?"

Billy moved back on the bed, eyes darting around the room. "Where is he?"

"Nobody's here, nobody but us. You can see for yourself."

The boy stiffened. "No, he's coming—can't you hear him?"

And she did hear something, the sound of footsteps from the hall. For a moment Vera panicked, then relaxed as David entered.

Billy looked up. "Dad—did you see him?"

"See who?"

"That man. The one who was looking at me through the window."

David strode across the room and stared out into the night. "Nobody's outside," he said. "Look—the window's locked."

"But he was here." Billy's lower lip quivered. "He was standing there, outside."

"Now you know better than that." David turned, shaking his head. "We're upstairs here, on the second floor. So how could anyone be standing outside?"

Vera held Billy close. "It was only a bad dream," she said.

"No!" The boy pulled away. "I saw him! This old man—he had long white hair and a beard and little red eyes staring at me—"

Seeing the fear in Billy's face was all Vera could bear. Luckily for her, she couldn't see David's.

David's face was haggard in the hazy afternoon sunlight filtering through the parlor window. No wonder he was beat today; it had been a rough night before they got Billy calmed down and back to sleep again, and there'd been little enough rest for him afterward.

Vera was probably right about the nightmare—what else could it have been? She said the description of the face wasn't even a coincidence, really; most kids tend to be afraid of old men and it's only natural when they show up in their dreams.

Natural or not, David didn't want to think about explanations now because other things were more important. Bad enough that this place bugged him, but if it spooked Billy that was the last straw. He'd made up his mind this morning; they had to get out of here. Monday he'd drive back to the city and make the rounds and this time he wouldn't be so choosy, just take anything he could get, as long as they could move away before winter.

Right now the thing to do was revise his résumé, play down all that executive-experience stuff that might turn off employers who were only looking for somebody to fill an ordinary accounting job. A pay cut didn't matter; what mattered was getting out.

But it was hard to concentrate, hard to figure how to rewrite the damned thing. Maybe Vera could help; she was good with words.

David looked up and called. "Honey—can you come here for a minute?"

No answer.

"Vera—"

Still no reply, only the tick-tock of the grandfather's clock.

He pushed back his chair and rose, striding down the hall to the kitchen. He could have sworn he saw her go there only minutes ago, but the room was empty now. Where had she disappeared to?

# PUMPKIN

Peering across the room he saw that the kitchen door was ajar.

It was fear that forced him forward. Flinging the door wide, he moved out into the yard, calling her name. Before he realized it, he was at the edge of the road.

For a moment David hesitated, glancing off into the purple haze haloing the ruined house, the weed-infested garden patch and the treetops rising darkly from the slope below. He wanted to stop but he couldn't, because he knew. It hit him the moment he saw the open kitchen door.

Crossing the road, he raised his voice in a shout. No response came, and desperation drove him past the huddled house and the windswept weeds, his feet churning dead leaves as he stared at the dead limbs of the towering trees beyond.

Then he did halt, heart hammering. Something was moving down there below between the twisted tree trunks—moving and emerging.

"Vera!"

She came toward him, hair disheveled, her housedress splotted and stained. But she was smiling.

"I thought I heard you," she said.

David stared at her, numb with relief. "Are you all right?"

"Of course. Why shouldn't I be?"

"But what were you doing over here?"

She reached out and took his hand. "I'll show you."

Before he could resist she was leading him forward, down into the woods, into the forbidden forest, while the voices rose. "*No—don't go—keep away from there, you hear?*" His aunt's voice, and his uncle's, dead voices echoing over the years.

Now Vera's voice, here and very much alive. "After last night I couldn't help it. Oh, I knew there was nothing to worry about, but I had to make sure. And I did find something—here."

She halted in a little clearing deep down under the trees, pointing to a cluster of matted grass and wilted wildflowers which sprouted from an oblong mound. "You know what this is?"

David blinked, silent and uncomprehending.

"Can't you guess?" Vera smiled again. "It's a grave."

She stooped, parting the tangled growth at the far end of the mound and disclosing a weathered wooden slab. It bore neither dates nor inscription, only the crudely carved lettering of a name:

JED HOLLOWAY

"You see?" Vera nodded toward the mound. "Now we know there's nothing to be afraid of. He's been dead and buried here for years."

*Nothing to be afraid of.* David nodded automatically and again she took his hand, leading him away from the dead man's grave, past the twisted

trunks of the dead trees, up the path between the skeleton of the dead house and the ruined remains of the dead garden.

But the garden wasn't entirely dead. A flash of vivid color caught his eye in the rays of the setting sun and then he saw it clearly—the orange outline, rounded and resting amidst the weeds. Vera saw it too.

"Look, a pumpkin!" Her smile broadened. "Just what we needed."

"Needed?" David frowned.

"Don't tell me you've forgotten. Tonight's Halloween." She stooped, reaching toward the pumpkin, but David yanked her away.

"Leave it alone."

"But David—"

"Leave it alone, I said!"

A sudden blast of sound interrupted Vera's reply. The two of them turned, glancing toward the road at another orange object—the school bus, halting before their yard.

They crossed over to it just as Billy got out. The bus moved off, trailing a cloud of exhaust, and he turned to them, his face flushed with excitement.

"Guess what?" he cried. "We had a Halloween party at school. Miss Zelisko gave us a whole bunch of colored paper to make masks and black cats and witches and ghosts and we had a cake and orange soda and boy was it ever neat—"

"Take it easy, young man," Vera said. "If you don't slow down you'll trip over your tongue."

They moved across the yard to the back door. "You should of been there," Billy said. "All the kids, they're getting ready to go in town tonight for trick or treat. Can you drive me, Dad?"

"Sorry, son, I've got work to do." Anticipating the next question, David continued quickly. "And don't ask your mother. I'm going to need her help."

Vera glanced at him. "Maybe for just an hour, if we went early—"

David shook his head. "I really do need you. I'm stuck in the middle of that damned résumé."

The boy's smile withered, then suddenly blossomed anew. "Okay. But I can have a jack-o'-lantern, can't I?"

"A what?"

"Don't you know about jack-o'-lanterns? Miss Zelisko made one and brought it to class for the party. It's a big pumpkin, only you carve a face on it. Then you squish out the insides and put in a candle to light up the face."

"Now I remember," David nodded. "We used to put one in the window on Halloween night when I was a kid."

"Can I do it tonight, Dad? If we put it in the front window it would look—"

"Real neat," David said. "Trouble is, we don't have a pumpkin."

"Yes we do." Billy beamed happily. "I saw one

## Something was moving down there below the twisted tree trunks.

yesterday—a great big one, too. It's across the way in that old garden. We can get it right now—"

"No."

"But it's just an old pumpkin." Billy's voice took on a shrill edge. "Nobody even lives there, so it's not like stealing. Why can't I have it?"

"Because I say so, that's why." Ignoring Vera's look, David took his son's arm. "It's getting dark. Time to go inside."

Billy gazed up at him in mingled disappointment and defiance. "What's the matter, Dad—you afraid of ghosts or something?"

"There are no ghosts," Vera said.

But she wasn't talking to Billy.

**N**obody was talking to Billy now. He could hear Mom and Dad in the front parlor, arguing about the resumé, whatever that was. Something you showed people when you wanted to get a job, like. Anyhow he hoped it wouldn't work because then they'd have to move back into town and he liked it here. This place was neat and even school was better than that old dump in the city. The only thing wrong was Dad, the funny way he acted lately. Like yesterday when he caught him sneaking across the road, and tonight, not letting him have the pumpkin.

No fair, that's what it was. Other kids were going trick or treating, getting money and candy and good stuff like that. But he couldn't even have a plain old pumpkin lying right there on the ground across the way. What good did it do to leave it? When the frost came it would only spoil. And it would make a real neat jack-o'-lantern, too, sitting there in the front window for kids to see when they came driving past with their folks on the way to trick or treat in town.

But what did Dad care? All he cared about was this resumé thing and now he was yelling at Mom again, real loud this time. So loud that he wouldn't even hear if somebody went out the kitchen door.

Two minutes is all it would take. Two minutes to sneak across the road and get that old pumpkin. Nobody would notice, not if you were quiet.

Just to prove it Billy came downstairs slow and careful. Sure enough, both of them were sitting in the parlor at the table under the lamp and they kept on arguing without looking up.

And the lock on the kitchen door opened easy. It was almost dark outside now, dark and sort

of chilly with a lot of clouds in the sky and a big orange moon coming up over the trees. Orange like the pumpkin across the road.

Billy crossed real fast and headed for the garden patch. He could hear the leaves scrunching under his feet and the wind blowing through the trees down there in the woods. When he got to the garden it was all shadows and he couldn't see the pumpkin lying under the weeds. The wind was sort of wailing now.

But Billy wasn't afraid of the shadows. And he wasn't afraid of that old house no matter how spooky it looked, because nobody lived inside. If the boards creaked that was just the wind. He was all alone here with nobody to see or stop him.

Now he saw the pumpkin next to a vine where the weeds were hiding it. Billy bent down to reach out for it.

And felt the cold hand gripping his shoulder.

**I** shouldn't have scared the kid, David told himself. Sitting there in the kitchen with only the bottle for company he stared out into the moonlight and poured himself another drink.

How was he to know the kid would be so shook up? He'd been shook up too when he noticed Billy was gone, and running across the road to get him was the natural thing to do. It wasn't as if he really feared for Billy's safety, but somebody had to teach him to follow orders. Why couldn't Vera understand?

But she didn't understand, any more than Billy. Instead she took his part. "Never mind that stupid old pumpkin," she told him. "How about you and I driving into town for trick or treat?"

Stupid pumpkin. *Stupid David*, that's what she really meant, and it hurt. Did she think he was wigging out? All he wanted was to protect the boy, teach him a little discipline.

Instead she rewarded him for his disobedience. Naturally, Billy was overjoyed and the two of them left happily together. Left him without another word, left him alone there feeling like a fool.

David raised his glass, watching it turn orange-gold in the moonlight streaming in from the window. The whiskey was orange-gold too, and as he drank it kindled a golden glow inside, warming and expanding.

He set the glass down with a sigh. *Maybe I am a fool*. Was it the liquor talking or did he really feel that way? He wasn't quite sure, but now he was able to face the possibility as his anger ebbed.

Perhaps he'd overreacted. After all, Billy was just a kid and his excitement was normal for his age. It wasn't his fault David felt the way he did about Halloween and something that had happened twenty-five years ago.

Vera was right; he was a grown man now and Jed Holloway was in his grave. Why keep him alive in his own mind?

# PUMPKIN

David brought himself another drink. Bottle getting empty, he was getting full. But the whiskey was helping, helping him to think straight for the first time in months.

When you came right down to it, what did he really know about Jed Holloway? Seen through a child's eyes he'd been pure evil, but as a reasoning adult David knew nothing is completely pure or entirely evil. That talk about witchcraft was just local gossip, but even if it had been true, all it meant was that an eccentric old man got mixed up in superstitious nonsense.

There was no proof he'd ever actually harmed anyone, not even David himself. The events of that long-ago Halloween night had been colored by a child's imagination. Nothing actually happened except that Holloway had run him off his property.

Besides, he was dead now and David didn't believe in ghosts. So why was he acting this way? He'd only end up harming himself, and perhaps harming Billy too. No, Vera was right and he was wrong. No sense passing along his own foolish fears to the youngster.

Maybe it was already too late now, but at least he could try to undo the damage. He owed it to Billy, and to Vera. And there was a way.

David lurched to his feet and opened the top drawer at the side of the sink. His fingers fumbled, then closed around the handle of a big butcher knife. Pulling it out, he headed for the kitchen door. *By God, if my boy wants a jack-o'-lantern he's going to have one.*

Stumbling across the road, David felt no fear. He wasn't afraid of the night, not even when the moon hid behind a cloud. Perhaps the moon was afraid of the wind and the way the shutters banged against the boarded-up windows of the old house, but David didn't care. The woods down below were black as ink and he could hear the groaning of dead branches rubbing against the gnarled tree trunks, but that didn't scare him.

He weaved across the weedy garden, searching for the dark outline of the pumpkin on the ground below. When he found it there was nothing frightening about that either. Perhaps this was why people got the idea in the first place—carving a harmless vegetable into a hobgoblin face just to show they weren't afraid.

David knelt beside the pumpkin, wrenched it free from the rotting vine, and lifted his knife. Drink made his fingers clumsy at first, but they steadied when he went to work. Squatting in the darkness he hollowed out the inside, then sliced away at the surface. First he cut two inverted triangles for eyes, then a longer one for the nose below.

Now the moon came out from behind the clouds and David wielded the knife quickly, forming the mouth into a grinning gash. The result was a perfect pumpkin head and he stared at it with a smile of

satisfaction.

Suddenly the face of the pumpkin disappeared in shadow, looming from behind.

Then David turned and looked up into the *other* face.

It was a wonderful surprise, seeing the face in the front window as Vera drove into the yard. Billy saw it too and he bubbled. "Look, Mom—the jack-o'-lantern!"

Vera nodded. Gazing at the pumpkin resting against the window ledge inside she felt as though a weight had been lifted from her. The candle within the hollowed-out pumpkin danced merrily behind the eyes and nose and mouth as the jack-o'-lantern smiled its warm welcome.

Her own smile warmed as she realized what its presence meant. David had come to his senses and from now on all would be well.

She cut the lights and motor, then emerged from the car. Billy's door was already open and he slid out from the seat; he was so excited he dropped his trick-or-treat bag, and its contents spilled across the ground below.

"Pick that stuff up," she told him. "I'm going in."

The front door was unlocked and she entered quickly, not even stopping to turn on the light. The parlor was dark, but over at the window the jack-o'-lantern cast its friendly glow.

"David, where are you?" she called.

There was no answer, nor any need of one. For as she moved to the window she saw what rested beneath it.

David was slumped against the windowpane. And the jack-o'-lantern wasn't on the ledge. Instead the pumpkin was perched between David's shoulders.

On the stump where his head had been.

Somehow Vera found the strength. The strength to keep Billy in the yard while she called the state police, the strength to tell them what happened when they came, the strength to lead them down into the woods to Jed Holloway's grave.

It had been disturbed, its surface uprooted, the earth mound yawning open so there was scarcely need to dig. But setting down a lantern at the graveside, they did. A trooper offered a sympathetic shoulder and Vera pressed against it, averting her gaze as the other two officers wielded their shovels.

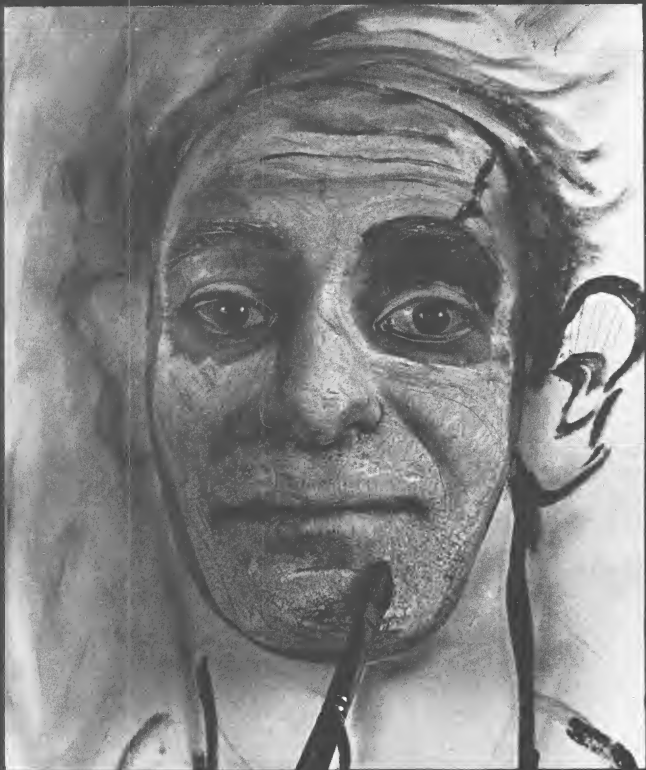
One of them spoke now. "Hey, look at the coffin—the lid's all splintered."

He slid it back, then gasped.

It was his gasp that caused Vera to look up, then run forward and peer down into the grave, into the open coffin and the moldering outline of what lay within—a fully articulated skeleton, the skull mouth frozen in a ghastly grin.

Cradled in its bony arm was David's head. 17

*It bore a definite resemblance to death.*



## AUTUMN LOVE

by Timothy Lindop

**C**arol Heilbroner's husband was working late again. He didn't call; he rarely did. Recently, she had taken to long walks when left alone. She never knew where she was going and hardly ever remembered the streets she had taken...

## AUTUMN LOVE

The night was cool and the moon dim behind the clouds. The streetlamps were mostly dark with their bulbs blown or broken. She walked the three miles from her home to the corner of Turner and Sixth before she realized what neighborhood she was in. There was a bar nearby. A car jutting fins pulled alongside the curb. Two slouching black teenagers climbed out. One eyed her incuriously as he passed. Through the bar's window she saw people sitting in the dark. She watched the black teenagers walk into the bar and become shadows. People played pool inside. Following each sound of a striking ball a stick moved through the smoke. Laughter came from the bar.

Carol Heilbroner was forty, and her husband forty-five. Together, they had seen him rise to the presidency of his bank. Now she mostly saw him in the morning. He would come home at night after she had gone to bed. Unless, that is, he spent the night on the office couch.

Carol saw a man drinking alone at a table. His face was thin, unshaven, and he wore a blue shirt. A scar sloped above his left eye. He was tall and gaunt. He looked possibly in his forties, though his roughness made him look older. He sipped his beer, licked his lips. She watched him. He put his beer down and saw her. Carol felt embarrassed and wanted to turn away, but found herself caught in his stare. His eyes were friendly. A black man in his sixties leaned over and spoke to him. He wasn't listening. He kept looking at her. Saluting with his beer, he nodded. The old black man looked up and saw her, too. She stiffened. She walked into the street. She heard the bar door open. Car lights swung to face her. Someone grabbed her arm and she screamed. She was thrown back against the curb. Brakes screeched. She heard a thump.

The bar emptied into the street. The old black man from the bar leaned over Carol. She heard him ask her something. She was trembling. She closed her eyes until she heard his voice ask if she was all right. She kept her eyes closed, not answering. A woman's voice broke: "Oh my God!" A man said, "I didn't see him, man. Where'd he come from, anyway?"

Carol, opening her eyes, felt her bruises and got to her feet. She saw the black man confronting a thin, junkie-pale white man in his early twenties. A crowd pushed behind the black man. Several men held upright cue sticks. When Carol stood the people on the sidewalk moved away. The black man was gesturing toward her. "You were going to hit that girl," he was saying. "He threw her out of the way."

Carol saw the man who had saluted her lying in front of the car, blood surrounding his head, his body broken at an angle. An underage girl, fresh in her teens with thin dark hair, knelt beside him. She impaled the driver with her look. "He's dead, you bastard," she said.

It started to rain. Carol slipped off before the

police arrived. She lived in a town house three miles away in a good neighborhood a world distant. Her house was comfortable, expensively furnished, and filled with a lifetime of marriage. She entered the living room without turning on the lights. She turned the stereo low on a classical station. Her husband was still out. Wet, she sat on the edge of her chair. The rain fell against the windows. She had fled in fear, sending him smack into the car he had saved her from. She felt like his murderer.

Steve Heilbroner, dressed in his dark suit, sat drinking coffee and reading the paper when Carol entered the kitchen.

"Good morning," she said, startled. "What time did you get in?"

Steve set down his cup. "Last night," he said.

"I didn't hear you come in," Carol said. She looked at him. He didn't respond. "Breakfast?"

Steve folded his paper, leaning closer to study it. "No, thanks."

Carol's hands twitched indecisively until they dropped awkwardly to her sides. She poured herself coffee and sat on the other side of his paper. She looked into her cup, feeling worn. She was aware of the bags under her eyes. Sipping her coffee, she studied her husband.

If you used an eraser to smooth out the lines above his forehead, worked away at the bags under his eyes, and coaxed his brown eyes out from hiding far back in his sockets where they moved suspiciously, he would be less harsh. She searched for a way to tell him what had happened last night. She wanted to say something, but her words were blocked.

Steve pushed back his chair, rising. He took a last sip from his coffee and set his cup in the sink.

"Steve," Carol said, "wait. I have something to tell you. Last night—"

"I have to go, Carol. Can't it wait?" He reached for the door.

Carol's throat throbbed. "No, damn it."

He looked at his watch. "If it's about last night," he said, "I had to work late. Sorry I didn't call, but—"

"No, it's not that." She stared helplessly at her husband and began to cry.

Steve glanced from his watch to his wife, then out to the street, before looking back to his wife. A tolerant smile strained his face. "Don't do that," he said, looking again at his watch. "I have to go," he said, his tone becoming harsher. She stopped, looking away from him. "I have to work late again tonight," he said. "But I expect to be home early tomorrow. Maybe," his voice softened, "maybe then we can spend some time together and talk. Okay?"

"Just go," she said, unmoving. "Just go."

Steve hesitated on the threshold. "I'm coming home for supper, though. Don't forget. Judy and her boyfriend are coming over."

Judy was their daughter.





When he was gone, Carol stirred her coffee with her finger. Her anger toward her husband left her cold. Rising, she moved to the living room where she kept her paints. An easel supporting a canvas stood by the picture window. Sitting there, she held a brush in one hand and the palette in the other. She began to sketch a wooden table she had seen last night in the bar. She roughed-in the man she had seen killed, putting him behind the table. She was surprised, when she started on the details, to find herself painting as many scars as she did. She touched more paint to the canvas. The color rose red around his cheeks. There had been something soft about this man, despite his battered look. She worked around the mouth, loosening it, making it less tight and grim.

The phone rang. She put down her brushes. "Hello?" A man's voice spoke her husband's name and the phone clicked off. She hung up, wondering. Then the phone rang again. Her stomach felt queasy. She backed away and turned to her paint-

ing. The figure in the canvas, with its eyes painted cobalt-blue, reproached her. To her relief, the phone stopped.

Dinner with their daughter Judy and her boyfriend Ted was uneventful. They had come down from upstate New York where Judy was to begin a new job as a teacher's aide. They were planning on marrying, and were both overjoyed. Ted was a red-headed construction worker who hoped to attend SUNY and study law. He was twenty-three. Judy was twenty, a tall blonde with a square jaw. Carol remembered that jaw hard-set against her when Judy was a teenager and resented being anyone's daughter. The thought amused Carol. The Heilbrons were not worried about their daughter's future with Ted. His present income was meager, but he had his plans. The Heilbrons had less when they married.

Steve sat at the head of the table in his suit and tie, chewing slowly. Though he sat across from Carol, he rarely glanced at her. Occasionally, he would ask Judy or Ted something about themselves. Carol didn't mind that Judy and Ted were not in a conversational mood. She remembered when she and Steve were in love, Judy laughed when Ted smiled. They were in a world of their own. Carol felt sad. She put her fork down, finished eating.

"Ted," Steve said. "Would you like an after-dinner cigar?"

Ted looked up, surprised. Judy smiled encouragingly. "Sure," he said, straightening his back. "I would." The two men rose, leaving mother and daughter to clear the table.

"Mother," Judy said, "I'm so happy."

Carol hugged her daughter. "I'm happy for you," she said.

They joined the two men in the living room where they stood smoking cigars in front of Carol's finished painting. Each held a slender glass from which he sipped Amaretto. Steve languidly exhaled smoke while butting his cigar. Smoke rose around Ted's head, seemingly pouring from his ears. He grinned helplessly at Judy as they entered.

Ted waved smoke from his face. "I like your painting, Mrs. Heilbroner."

Her husband turned from the painting to study her. "Yes," he said, "it is good."

"Why, thank you," she said.

"Mom," Judy said, "it's wonderful! When did you do it?"

Carol turned, pleased. "During the day."

"All those scars," Steve said. "There was a man in the bank today who looked just like that. His face was badly scarred, like your portrait. Looks like this guy and the one I saw met somewhere and had it out," Steve smiled. "Funny thing. I was at my desk when I saw him. He was standing by the potted plant. Looking right at me. Made me damn

# AUTUMN LOVE

uncomfortable."

A moment followed in which no one said a word. Steve laughed, shrugging.

"Daddy," Judy said. "You must be careful. The city is full of strange characters."

The evening ended early. Ted and Judy begged off to make the return trip upstate so that Judy could begin her new job in the morning. Steve had work waiting for him in his office. He left. Finished with the cleaning, Carol watched television before turning in. She sat at her dresser, brushing her hair. Her hair was light brown. She touched it, feeling its dryness. In the brown were strands of white. Though she was still pretty, wrinkles had loosened her cheeks. *I'm forty*, she thought sadly.

Next day, Steve called.  
"Call off your dog," he said.

"What?"

"I said call off your dog."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said.

"The man you have following me. Get him off."

"What?" she repeated.

"I know your patterns, Carol. That painting of yours is your way of letting me know you're having an affair."

"You're crazy."

"I wish I was. The painting you did is of the man who is following me," he said.

She felt the sensation of a hand moving up her spine. "Steve," she said, "go to the police."

"No," he said. "I'm coming home so we can talk."

Carol circled the painting warily. The man sat behind the table drinking beer. He was scarred, not callused. Rough flesh made a hard face soft around mouth and eyes. A day's growth bristled on his chin. Despite his appearance, he was not a harsh-looking man. Though his mouth was set straight, its corners seemed to move upward, suggesting a smile. Carol blinked. She stepped close. She had painted a copper-plated bar behind him. The man's blue eyes were focused somewhere outside the room he sat in. A bartender in rolled sleeves was polishing the bar top. In the rear was half a pool table. A figure stood holding a cue stick. Three patrons sat hunched over the bar. She searched the man's face. His gaze was unwavering. She caught her breath, feeling herself slipping into the painting, engulfed by it. She almost welcomed the feeling, but pulled back, and went out for a walk.

She returned to find Steve standing by her painting, his face grimly taut.

"How long has this been going on?" he said.

"Do you have any idea how silly you sound?"

"God damn you! Are you seeing this man?" He

pointed to the painting.

A thought occurred to her. "Can you tell me you love me?" she asked.

Steve faced her. "Don't change the subject. I've seen him. I know he's real."

He was real that night on the street corner—the bar, her fear, the angle of the man's broken body, the rain. Now, her feet were tired. She took off her shoes. She looked up, prepared to speak, but caught herself. What had eluded her during all those long walks she now found the courage to face:

"I don't know if I still love you," she said.

"What?"

"I think I want a divorce," she said.

Steve was silent.

Carol looked down, speaking quietly. "All we've been doing is hurting each other."

"This wouldn't have happened if he—"

"He's not our problem," she said.

She listened as he moved to the door. He turned with his hand on the knob. He faltered. "This hasn't been for nothing, you understand." As if she didn't get his meaning, he waved his hand. "Us, I mean."

Carol watched helplessly as he walked out the door.

She sat unmoving as the evening lengthened. A pain filled her chest. The painting was all she had for company. She considered going after her husband. She thought, *This is a mistake, I must find him*, but her legs wouldn't respond. She cried. Her lips tasted salty. The house grew dark. She took a deep breath. Slowly, without thinking, she tapped a rhythm on the arm of her chair. She pulled the knots out of her hair with her fingers.

Through the window she saw the man walking stiffly up the sidewalk. Despite the chilly night, he was not wearing a jacket. He wore a blue shirt. He stopped and saluted her. It was the man from the bar, the "lover" she had painted. Terrified, she reached to draw the curtains, but his eyes stopped her. Her heart began to beat less frantically. He looked at her with the same eyes she had imagined, that allure she had painted. Turning, she went up the stairs to her room, as in a dream.

Closing the door, she put on her nightgown. In bed, she opened a book and stared. She waited until she heard the downstairs door open. She put away the book. She heard his footsteps approaching her room and turned off the lights. The doorknob turned. Her stomach twisted. He stepped in. His skin was pale. A scar sloped above his eye. She was shaking. He moved near.

"What will become of me?" she asked the dead man.

He surveyed her face and spoke softly. "I love you," he said.

Carol smiled. He leaned forward to kiss her. She parted her lips and closed her eyes. 17

# A CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE



by Joe and Karen Lansdale

*It was one of those days when nothing seemed to go right.  
Even the garbage tasted funny.*

**G**ot up this morning and couldn't take it anymore. I'd had all the cutesy words and hugs I could take from the old gal, and I'd also had it with my food. She thought that just because I liked something once, I couldn't wait to have it every day.

Course, it beat hell out of that McWhipple burger I got out of the next-door neighbor's trash can. I saw him toss it out, and as I recall, he was looking mighty green and holding his stomach. Didn't bother me none, though; I'd eaten out of his trash can before. (He even took a shot at me one night on account of it.) But this McWhipple burger would have made a vulture choke! Must've been kangaroo meat or something. Or maybe the burger had just been lying on the assembly line too long. In any case, it sure made me sick, and up until then I could eat anything short of strychnine.

See, that's part of the problem. Suddenly I couldn't stand the way I'd been living. Just came over me, you know? One day I was fine and happy as a tick in an arm pit, and the next day things were no longer hokay-by-me. I wanted a change of lifestyle.

It was all so goofy ... the way I was feeling in

the head, I thought maybe I'd got some medical problems, you know? So first thing I thought of was to go see the doc. Figured I ought to do that before I made any drastic changes—changes like getting the old lady out of my life, finding a new place to live, that sort of thing. I just wanted to make sure I wasn't having a spell of some sort, one of them metabolic shake-ups.

So the doc was the ticket. I mean, he'd always been nice to me. A few pills and needles, but that's to be expected, right?

Next problem was getting out of the house without making a scene. Old gal treated me like some sort of prisoner, and that didn't make it easy.

The window over the sink was open, though, and that's how I plotted my escape. It was hard for me to get my body up and through the opening, but I managed. Made the six-foot drop without so much as a sprained ankle.

I got my thoughts together, charted out the doc's office, and set out. On the way, I noticed something weird: not only was I having this change in attitude, I seemed to be having some physical problems, too. I could feel stuff shifting around inside me, the way you feel the wind when it changes.

## A CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE

When I finally reached the doc's, man, was I bushed. Caught this lady coming out with a white cat under her arm, and she looked at me like I was the strange one. I mean, here she was with a cat under her arm, things hanging off her ears and wrists and wearing as much war paint as an Indian in a tv western, and she looks at me like I'm wearing a propeller beanie or something.

I slid in before she closed the door, and I looked around. People were sitting all over the place, and they had their pets with them. Dogs, cats, even a pet monkey.

I suddenly felt mighty sick, but I figured the best thing to do was to hang tough and not think about my problem. I decided to get a magazine down from the rack, but I couldn't get one down. Couldn't seem to hold onto it.

People were staring.

So were their pets.

I decided the heck with this and went right over to the receptionist. Standing on on my hind legs, I leaned against the desk and said, "Listen, sweetheart, I've got to see the doc, and pronto."

"Oh, my God!" she screamed. "A talking Siberian husky!" Then she bounced her appointment book off one of my pointy ears.

Was this any way to run a veterinarian's office?

Man, did that place clear out fast. Nothing but a few hairs—dog, cat, and blue rinse—floating to the floor.

The doc obviously wasn't the ticket. I cleared out of there myself and ran three blocks on my hind legs before I realized it. I felt good, too. Problem was, it tended to stop traffic.



I got down on all fours again, and though it hurt my back, I walked like that until I got to the park. As soon as I reached it, I stood up on my hind legs and stretched my back. I tell you, that felt some better.

There was a bum sitting on a park bench tipping a bottle, and when he lamped me coming toward him, he jumped up, screamed, and ran away, smashing his bottle on a tree as he went.

Sighing, I took his place on the bench, crossed my legs, and noticed that a fleshy pink knee was poking up through a rip in my fur. Man, what next?

There was a newspaper lying beside me, and having nothing better to do, I picked it up. Didn't have a lick of trouble holding it. My toes had lengthened now, and my dew claw could fold and grasp. The hair on the back of my paws had begun to fall off.

The paper was the morning edition. The first article that caught my eye was about this guy over on Winchester—and why not? That was right next door to from where I'd been living with the old hag. It was the fellow who'd tossed out the hamburger.

Seems he went weird. Woke up in the middle of the night and started baying at the moon through his bedroom window. Later on he got to scratching behind his ears with his feet, even though he was still wearing slippers. Next he got out of the house somehow and started chasing cars. Lady finally had to beat him with a newspaper to make him stop—at which point he raised his leg and peed on her, then chased the neighbor's cat up a tree.

That's when the old lady called the nut-box people.

By the time they got there the guy'd gotten a case of hairy knees, a wet nose, and a taste for the family dog's Gravy Train. In fact, the man and the dog got into a fight over it, and the man bit the rat terrier's ear off.

Yeeccccchhh—fighting over Gravy Train! They can have the stuff. Give me steak and taters.

Lady said she didn't know what had gone wrong. Said he'd gone to bed with a stomach ache and feeling a bit under the weather. And why not?—he'd got hold of a week-old hamburger from McWhipple's that she'd set on top of the refrigerator and forgotten about. Seems this guy was a real chow hound and went for it. Ate a couple of big bites before his taste buds had time to work and he realized he was chomping sewer fodder.

Ouch and flea bites! That must have been the same green meat I got a bite of.

I tossed the paper aside and patted my chest for a cigarette. No pockets, of course.

Just then, my tail fell off. It went through the slats in the park bench and landed on the ground. I looked down and saw it turn to dust, hair and all, till a little wind came along and whipped it away.

Man, some days the things that happen to you shouldn't happen to a dog. 17

# Letters

(continued from page 20)

a witch is cut; the sequence in which Jack (Kerwin Mathews) fights the marching Dragon Men has a ruinous song plastered over it. In the course of viewing this monstrosity, one is treated (if that's the word) to the sight of the late *Torin Thatcher*, that elegantly Shakespearean villain, mouthing lines while a dubbed-in basso buffoon sings them (in an atrocious melody). Worst of all, the film's climax—Jack's battle with the griffin—is marred by a sickeningly upbeat "Come on, Jack, you can do it!" song on the soundtrack.

There's no way to assess the damage that is done to the film, in terms of those unfortunate viewers who never saw the original. They will remember only a clownish, sickly sweet "kiddy show," which is a tragic fate for any fine fantasy film.

The only conceivable reason for redoing the film in this way would seem to be an attempt to make it as "salable" as some of the G-rated junk now available on cable. The policy seems to be that G ratings mean sugar-cured Garbage. Or, in this case, sugar-sickened. Give it some songs, and it's fit for children (which it already was, back in 1962!). Let us, for heaven's sake, feed our kids emotional pabulum—the least hint of anything frightening or exciting might be damaging to them, right?

I feel this destructive revamping must be protested, and *strongly*. It is the defamation and desecration of the work of talented craftsmen, and shows no respect for fantasy fans, children, or intelligent adults. Most frightening of all, if this atrocity is, God forbid, even a moderate success with the uninformed public, what other fantasy films may be dug out of their archives and "remade" so shamefully?

It's terrifying to think of what these idiots could do—we could, in years to come, see the skeleton fight in *Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* to the tune of "Dem Dry Bones"; see the *Thief of Bagdad* rise from his bottle to the strains of "On Top of Ol' Smokey"; see the Hydra in *Jason and the Argonauts* rear out of its den, its multiple heads singing seven-part harmony.

Fantasy film fans, unite! **INSIST ON THE ORIGINAL!**

—Michael M. Stratford  
Miles City, Montana

## DEFENDING "CATHAY"

Dear Editor:

I just wanted to tell you that Steven Millhauser's "Cathay" [TZ July/August] was wonderful! Mr. Dubrowski's letter in your last issue regarding historical inaccuracies certainly did the story an injustice. He missed the point of "Cathay" completely, responding to it as if it were a nonfiction article which had appeared in a magazine like *National Geographic*, rather than an imaginary travelogue in *Twilight Zone*.

Steven Millhauser captured a China all other fantasy Chinas should have to measure up against. Thanks for sharing him, and I hope he'll set a few stories in his Cathay for us to enjoy.

—Karen V. Haas  
Rockville Centre, New York

## SERLING'S SOURCES

Dear Editor:

After reading the *Twilight Zone* script "The Hitch-Hiker" [TZ July/August], I noticed similarities between it and a radio script of the same title. The earlier version, now available on cassette, was broadcast on a show called *Suspense*. (That's the same program that brought us Agnes Moorehead in "Sorry, Wrong Number.") "Hitch-Hiker" was broadcast on 9/2/42, and starred Orson Welles; I'm afraid I don't know who wrote it. The basic story and even some sections of the dialogue are identical. Wouldn't Rod have been a

little young to write the radio script? Did he adapt the tv script from the radio play?

Another brief comment: People often remember *Twilight Zone* episodes that never were. [See "Thanks for the Memory" in our November/December 1983 issue.—Ed.] It seems that some of these are variations on recognizable actual episodes. What could a psychologist learn about a person from comparing the original with the variant version? We could have a new diagnostic tool here. At the very least, this could be somebody's doctoral thesis.

—Eileen Ribbler  
Kettering, Ohio

As Marc Scott Zicree notes in *The Twilight Zone Companion* (Bantam, \$9.95), *Serling's* to script was based on the *Suspense* script by Lucille Fletcher—who also wrote "Sorry, Wrong Number." Ron Goulart pays homage to the series in this issue's *Nostalgia* column.

Your suggestion regarding "episodes that never were" is an ingenious one. In fact, similar lapses of memory have been used as a diagnostic tool, as far back as Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1904), incorporating his paper of six years earlier, "On the Psychic Mechanism of Forgetfulness." More recently, an analyst of our acquaintance spent two sessions interpreting a patient's revealingly detailed—and totally erroneous—"memory" of the ending of the 1955 Italian film *Umberto D.*—Ed. [7]



# THE OUTER LIMITS

Read the Story,  
See the Film

by David J. Schow

The Sandshark from "The Invisible Enemy" briefly appears in "Wolf 359."

*Outer Limits launched its second season with the work of established sf writers—and with decidedly mixed results.*

"Soldier from Tomorrow," a story featured in the October 1957 issue of *Fantastic Universe Science Fiction*, cost editor Hans Santesson a mere \$91. When its author, Harlan Ellison, adapted the story as the kickoff episode of *Outer Limits'* second season (restoring its original title, simply "Soldier"), he was paid about fifty-five times that amount. It was his first-ever science fiction teleplay.

As a season premiere, "Soldier" was a natural, laden with special effects and boasting a name star, Lloyd Nolan, who was paid more than any other actor who worked on the series. "Soldier" also vindicated the practice of basing episodes on published works of sf—the first rule laid down by the show's new producer, Ben Brady. The episode is notable for Ellison's script, Gerd Oswald's taut direction (he calls it "my favorite second-season show"), and a striking performance by Michael Ansara as Qarlo, a future foot soldier accidentally time-warped back to 1964. His mien is halting and predatory, a volatile confusion of fear, curiosity, and barely tethered violence that makes each attempt at communication by the present-day Earthmen a scene of touch-and-go tension.

Visual gimmicks are everywhere in "Soldier." The vaporizing-car routine first done for an earlier episode, "Architects of Fear," is recreated here. A

large, long, low-ceilinged stage at Paramount (originally a bowling alley) was converted into a fogbound valley of skeletal trees and battle debris. "We had a sky cyclorama running all the way around that stage," says Oswald. "It was gigantic. There was a horizon line of mountains in front of that, and then we just filled it up with the fog machine. It was a no-man's-land, flexible and changing, to contrast with the Nolan character's family life, which was very stable, as opposed to the uncertainties of the future world." The showstopper, though, is saved for the climax, as a homicidal Enemy from Qarlo's era catches up with him in 1964, burning his way through Nolan's living-room wall with a disintegrator rifle. Qarlo rushes him and they both zap out of existence. "Did the soldier finally come to care for those he protected?" asks the Control Voice. "Or was it just his instinct to kill?" Since most of Qarlo's interaction with Nolan's family was revised out of Act IV in favor of a scene where Qarlo panics and robs a gun shop, the question was something of a non sequitur.

In tv, they don't understand subtleties of character," says Ellison, who submitted story ideas during the first season but was not hired. "When a script runs long, or has production problems, the first things cut are the scenes that deepen characterization. Those changes tore the gut out of that

show—that's why, for me, it's a less attractive or interesting show than *Demon with a Glass Hand*."

Winner of the Trieste Film Festival and Writer's Guild awards, "Demon with a Glass Hand" is probably Ellison's best-realized sf teleplay. "I wrote the script as a kind of memo to myself," says Ellison, "so I wouldn't forget the basic plot. The novel is a much more complex story, and *Demon*' is just a little part of it."

"Harlan vanished all the time," notes Ben Brady. "It took him weeks and weeks to deliver a script, but once we got it, it would be pretty god-damned exciting. He disappeared while writing 'Soldier,' and that's why we only had two scripts from him, though we would've wanted more. If he didn't want to work, I'd be wasting my time that day; if he did, then nobody did it better. How can you live with a genius? All you can do is sit around and wait for him to *gene*."

Most of the action in "Demon" is confined to the baroque interior of Los Angeles's historic Bradbury Building, a classic edifice designed by George H. Wyman (Forrest J. Ackerman's grandfather, oddly enough) and featuring a wealth of ornamental ironwork, marble landings, and open-caged elevators driven by pillars of water. Shooting after normal business hours, director Byron Haskin and the *Outer Limits* crew once surprised a pair of thieves

burglarizing an office there in the dead of night.

Despite ABC's usual pressure to include ratings-boosting monsters in the new episodes, the two best stories done during the Brady regime—"Demon" and the two-part "The Inheritors"—featured none. "If we hadn't gotten 'Demon' early on," says Brady, "I'm sure ABC would've opted not to do it." The network had already given him grief over his use of directors who had worked during the first season. "Brady was forced to go a different direction in the second season, you see," explains Gerd Oswald. "ABC wanted more prosaic stuff than Joe Stefano's Grand Guignol, so it took Brady four or five shows before he had enough clout to say, 'Well, I want Gerd Oswald, period. And I want 'Bun' Haskin.'"

Network executives also objected to the script's only female character, Consuelo Losada, a garment worker who falls in love with the protagonist, Trent (Robert Culp), during his deadly cat-and-mousing with the murderous Kyben aliens. "I had written her into the script as a black woman," says Ellison, "and the network said she couldn't be black. 'Why not?' I said, and they answered, 'Because it's relevant. We did relevance last year and it didn't work.' So I said, 'How about if we make her a Puerto Rican?' 'NO!' Finally, she wound up as a sort of nameless Middle European, and they gave her a blond wig." Only the



Top: Wah Chang's original sketch for the Plag, the evil entity from Dundee's Planet in "Wolf 359." Below: Patrick O'Neal reacts to the actual Projects Unlimited effect.



Arlene Martel and Robert Culp consult the prosthetic computer in "Demon with a Glass Hand."

character's name was actually changed—to Consuelo "Biros"—and Ellison notes that "Arlene Martel played it as a Chicana."

"The pressure was to make the Consuelo character much less ethnic," says Robert Culp, who had been previously directed by the late Byron Haskin in "Architects of Fear." Haskin noted, "Culp's middle name should've been *Outer Limits*, because he's a weirdo of sorts. I'd line up a shot and meanwhile Culp would be hanging off some part of the ceiling on a rope, telling me that his idea of an entrance would be better. His line was always, 'This would be a great way to play it,' but I never fell for that!" How did Haskin rate the finished show? "I feel that it is by far the best episode of the second season."

Even Leslie Stevens and the deposed first-season crew admired "Demon with a Glass Hand": "We'd get literally en-

Courtesy: Wah Chang

vious and say it was an unjust world when somebody like Brady could bring off a show like that," Stevens recalls. "All I can say is, when it worked, our reaction was a combination of gladness, because the show was 'ours' in a way; being envious at their bringing it off; and absolute astonishment that they could bring it off. In other words, all the bad human response you could ask for in one package, we had."

As for the yet-unseen remainder of Trent's saga, Ellison will only say, "When the novel comes out, you'll know."

Perhaps the best example of how Brady's fiction-into-film edict failed to work was "The Invisible Enemy," based on a story by *Twilight Zone* scenarist Jerry Sohl. Published in the magazine *Imagination*, it concerns explorers to Mars who are being gulped down by a creature that strikes from beneath the red planet's sandy surface. "It was *Jaws*, actually, on Mars," says Sohl. "The way it came off on *Outer Limits* was ludicrous, because you saw the monster right off the bat. In the story, you didn't know what was killing those people until the very end."

"Enemy" sparked a true group effort at Projects Unlimited, which provided one of the new season's more ambitious monsters. "One of the biggest sets we ever had was the sand

ocean," says effects man Gene Warren, referring to the 6500-square-foot stage where the Martian backdrop was laid. For the monster shots, finely ground cork "sand" was spread atop five feet of water in a tank at Projects. Beneath the surface was Paul Petit in a scuba suit, manipulating Wah Chang's hand-puppet "sand shark" according to a code tapped out on the side of the tank by Tim Baar. Later, these miniature shots were married to footage of Adam West and others reacting atop prop spurs of rock on the full-sized set. Mattes and rear-projection were used to impart enormous size to the monster. "It was probably the most challenging effect we did for the show," says Warren.

A less successful group effort fire-bombed the script for "Enemy." To Brady, Sohl's first-draft teleplay was "not good. It needed a lot of extra pencil work. Even I wrote some of it." He passed it on to story editor Seeleg Lester (another staff holdover from Brady's tenure as producer of *Perry Mason*), who suggested a whodunit format. "All I know," recalls Sohl, "is that Lester tried to get me to write a script incorporating the camera in scenes *underneath* the sands of Mars." Sohl's own version would have required a huge budget for cast and effects; at one point, an astronaut holds

an entire pack of the sand sharks at bay with meat biscuits intended for his ship's mascot, a dog who later gets staked out as bait himself. Even the dog got written out. Lester contends that Brady and director Byron Haskin forced changes in the script in order to toss the network a few of the monsters it was constantly demanding.

"They told me this show was budgeted and on schedule," said Haskin. "The script was bad beyond reason, totally without cohesion, and if I had



Harry Lubin's opening title theme from *Outer Limits*' second season.

gone ahead and directed it as originally written, the show would not have been aired. After twenty-eight hours at the typewriter I tore it apart and brought it up to a fine mediocre. Only a disorganized production team could let something so terrible survive long enough to warrant a full production job." Brady rewrote the final act into what he terms "a calm fourth quarter. Haskin saved what could be salvaged."

But nothing quite cripples a show more than the writer, director, producer, and story editor all hating the script. "Lester thought the fault was mine," Sohl concludes, "and told me that while they'd buy more stories from me, they did not want me writing the scripts. As a result, my story 'Counterweight' was corrupted—I could not stand to watch it when it appeared and have not, to date, seen the finished product."



Red Morgan as Adam Link, Robot.

NEXT: THE END



## THE OUTER LIMITS

### Part Six

"There is nothing wrong with your television set. Do not attempt to adjust the picture. We are controlling transmission. We will control the horizontal. We will control the vertical. We can change the focus to a soft blur, or sharpen it to crystal clarity. For the next hour, sit quietly and we will control all that you see and hear. You are about to experience the awe and mystery which reaches from the inner mind to THE OUTER LIMITS."

by David J. Schow and Jeffrey Frentzen

*Continuing our seven-part survey of the series, complete with the words of the celebrated 'Control Voice.'*

### 36. EXPANDING HUMAN

Broadcast October 10, 1964  
Written by Francis Cockrell  
Directed by Gerd Oswald

#### Cast

Dr. Roy Clinton (Skip Homeier), Dr. Peter Wayne (Keith Andes), Lt. Branch (James Doohan), Dean Flint (Vaughan Taylor), Lee Morrow (Peter Duryea), Dr. Henry Akada (Aki Akeong), Mrs. Merrill (Mary Gregory), Susan Wayne (Barbara Wilkin), Coroner Leland (Jason Wingreen), Mark Lake (Robert Doyle), Det. Sgt. Alger (Troy Melton), Receptionist (Shirley O'Hara), Elevator Operator (Bill Cort), Mr. Bellaire (Sherwood Keith), Night Watchman (Owen McGivney)

*"As far back as educated men have recorded their history, veils have been lowered to disclose a vast new reality—rents in the fabric of man's awareness. And somewhere, in the endless search of the curious mind, lies the next vision, the next key to his infinite capacity."*

Soon after the murder of a night

watchman inside a university lab devoted to researching "C.E. substances"



Keith Andes reacts to Skip Homeier's altered state.

(consciousness-expanding drugs), one of the instructors is found clinically dead in his apartment... but he sits up on the slab during his own autopsy, alive and piqued. Mr. Bellaire, a corporate head who plans to cut off funding to the C.E. lab due to the bad publicity caused by the murder investigation, is himself killed by the same hulking spectre that literally crushed

the breath from the night watchman's lungs. Dr. Roy Clinton, head of the C.E. program, reveals privately to his brother, Dr. Wayne, that the killer is his own C.E.-altered ego, a schizoid Hyde persona with inflated musculature, superhuman strength and learning skills, and a disappointingly predictable, fascist craving to populate the world with similarly "expanded" humans while consigning all contrary parties to death camps. The normal Clinton is unaware of the dictates of his expanded form due to self-imposed hypnotic blocks that allowed the Hyde version to function freely, using the Jekyll version as convenient alibi material. Now it's time to recruit Wayne, but Wayne resists Clinton's pitch and is forced to imbibe the C.E. mixture. When Branch, the investigating cop, stumbles in at the wrong time, Clinton catches several slugs—but does not bleed. He attempts to escape past a police cordon, holding his brother by the scruff of the neck and keeping Branch at gunpoint, but the C.E. dose wears off and his wounds begin to gush blood. When Clinton falls to the ground in death, the vials in his pocket containing the mixture are destroyed. Then Wayne tells Branch: "You'd better get me to a hospital—this drug is starting to take effect."

*"Some success, some failure, but either way the gnawing hunger to know is never sated, and the road to the unknown continues to be dark and strange."*

### 37. DEMON WITH A GLASS HAND

Broadcast October 17, 1964  
Written by Harlan Ellison  
Directed by Byron Haskin



Robert Culp as Trent.

# Cast

Mr. Trent/Voice of the Hand (Robert Culp), Consuelo Biro (Arlene Martel), Arch (Abraham Sofaer), Breech (Steve Harris), Battle (Rex Holman), Budge (Robert Fortier), Kyben/Stunt Arch (Wally Rose), Durn/Stunt Budge (Bill Hart), Kyben/Stunt Battle (Fred Krone), Stunt Trent (Dean Smith)

"Through all the legends of ancient peoples—Assyrian, Babylonian, Sumerian, Semitic—runs the saga of the eternal man, the one who never dies, called by various names in various times, but historically known as Gilgamesh. The man who has never tasted death, the hero who strides through the centuries."



Trent: "I was born ten days ago, a full-grown man . . ."



An unconscious Trent is saved from Durn (Bill Hart) by Consuelo (Arlene Martel).



Steve Harris as the Kyben, Breech.

Circa 2964, Earth is conquered in one month by an alien race called the Kyben. The entire population vanishes overnight, after losing retaliation in the form of a radioactive plague that will render the planet uninhabitable by the invaders. The agent of humankind's salvation, an enigmatic, white-clad man named Trent, escapes into the past—1964—through a Kyben "time mirror." He possesses a prosthetic computer hand that "holds all knowledge," but the Kyben hold three lobes—glass fingers—of the device and chase Trent into the past because they need the completed hand to tell them where the seventy billion people of Earth have hidden, and how to defeat the plague. Trent, in turn, needs the lobes to enable the glass hand to reveal more of his own identity and purpose, which is a blank. Using a force bubble, the Kyben seal Trent within the confines of a dilapidated office complex, where he finds an unwitting ally in Consuelo Biro, a garment worker also trapped inside. Together they commence killing aliens and collecting glass fingers. When the computer coolly advises Trent that his best course of action is to permit the Kyben to shoot him, he complies without hesitation . . . and Consuelo later obeys the hand's directions for bringing Trent miraculously back to life. He then tracks down the remaining Kyben and destroys the time mirror secreted in one of the building's offices, so that no more aliens will follow. Just when things begin to look romantic, the now-complete hand informs Trent that he is a robot, the seventy billion refugees are transcribed onto a wire inside him, and his job is to wait 1200 years, then release humankind back

into its own era after the plague has exterminated the Kyben. A shocked Consuelo quickly makes tracks for home while Trent, totally alone, begins waiting.

"Like the eternal man of Babylonian legend, like Gilgamesh, one thousand plus two hundred years stretches before Trent. Without love, without friendship. Neither man nor machine, waiting. Waiting for the day he will be called to free the humans who gave him mobility. Movement, but not life."

## 38. CRY OF SILENCE

Broadcast October 24, 1964

Written by Robert C. Dennis. Based on the story "Mind Over Matter" by Louis Charbonneau  
Directed by Charles Haas



June Havoc and Eddie Albert.

# Cast

Andy Thorne (Eddie Albert), Karen Thorne (June Havoc), Lamont (Arthur Hunnicutt), Stunt Karen (Helen Thurston), Stunt Lamont (Richard Farnsworth)

"In the not-distant future, the sound of man will invade those unknown depths of space which as yet we cannot even imagine. In his own world there are no places left beyond the reach of his voice. His neighbor is no longer just next door, but anywhere at the end of a wire. And it all began when

prehistoric man discovered the art of communication."

Checking up on some out-of-the-way real estate, Andy Thorne runs his convertible into a boulder blocking the remote country road. His wife Karen gets out of the car and promptly falls down a hillside, twisting her ankle. They are cut off from the car by a gang of apparently sentient tumbleweeds that locomote sans wind, and explode instead of burning when Andy ignites a few. After nightfall they are rescued by a torch-bearing rustic, Lamont, who saw a meteor fall to Earth two weeks before; after that, the weeds started capturing his livestock. When they attempt to escape together, the threat of the weeds is replaced by a bouncing invasion wedge of sinister bullfrogs that drives them back to Lamont's farmhouse. A similar gambit the next morning is thwarted by mobile boulders, one of which crushes Lamont. Andy improbably surmises that an alien intelligence is clumsily trying to make contact—any contact—long-distance, by animating what it thinks to be representative Earth life forms. Just then, Lamont's corpse shuffles back to the farmhouse, impelled by the alien force. But like the weeds, the frogs, and the rocks, he cannot communicate; rigor mortis has frozen his larynx, and he scrawls only a few patternless symbols before locking up completely. Eagerly, Andy hypnotizes himself, leaving a list of questions for his wife to ask when the alien force possesses his body ... but all it does through him is lament its failure: "Consciousness does exist on this strange pebble in the drift of space, but its nature remains a mystery." Then it gives up for good and goes away.

*"And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not ... The sound of man probes the dimensionless range of space, seeking an answer. But if it comes, will he hear, will he listen? Will he comprehend?"*

### 39. THE INVISIBLE ENEMY

Broadcast October 31, 1964

Written by Jerry Sohl, based on his short story. Developmental writing by Seleg Lester, Byron Haskin, and Ben Brady  
Directed by Byron Haskin



Adam West.



The Sandshark.

#### Cast

Maj. Charles "Lucky" Merritt (Adam West), Capt. Jack Buckley (Rudy Solari), Capt. Paul Lazzari (Peter Marko), Capt. Frank Johnson (Robert DoQui), General Winston (Joe Maross), Capt. Fred Thomas (Mike Mikler), Col. Hal Danvers (Chris Alcaide), Mr. Jerome (Ted Knight), Lt. James Bowman (Anthony Costello), Technician (James Tartan)

*"In the vast immensities of cosmic space, bold adventurers streak their way to join battle with strange enemies on strange worlds. The alien, the unknown, perhaps even the invisible, armed only with man's earthbound knowledge ..."*

The four-man M-2 probe touches down successfully on the surface of Mars. Its mission: to uncover the fate that befell the two-man crew of the M-1 three years earlier. According to monitor tapes, both men were gobbled up by forces unknown shortly after

venturing out of their spacecraft, and a twilight computer back on Earth suggests a ghost got them. The first M-2 man to investigate the M-1 wreckage is crunched within minutes of landing; now the computer rather more intelligently suggests that the Martian killer is invisible. During a more cautiously mounted sortie, Capt. Buckley discovers diamonds littering the landscape. His excitement over this causes him to lose sight of his spotter, Capt. Johnson, who quickly becomes victim number four. Despite being restricted to the ship, Buckley sneaks out to collect more diamonds and learns that the

"invisible" enemy is an enormous dragon that comes up from beneath the Martian surface—"Living in the sand like a shark in the ocean!" Maj. Merritt, the only other M-2 crewman left, doggedly pursues Buckley to try dragging him back to the ship, but instead gets marooned on a rock escarpment in the middle of the sand sea, with the "tide" rising and the hungry monster nearby. Using a blood-soaked garrison belt as a lure, Buckley fakes the creature out, and as Merritt runs to safety, Buckley obliterates the dragon with a nuclear-tipped bazooka shell. Six more very miffed creatures poke their heads up, roaring, but Buckley and Merritt make it back to the M-2 intact ... and with a substantial haul of gemstones.

*"Battle joined. Casualties? Yes. Resolution: Victory, of a sort. A painful step from the crib of destiny. On another day, a friend, perhaps, instead of a deadly peril—part of the saga of the space pioneers."*

#### 40. WOLF 359

Broadcast November 7, 1964

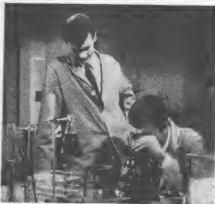
Written by Seeleg Lester. Based on a

Richard Landau story, "Greenhouse"

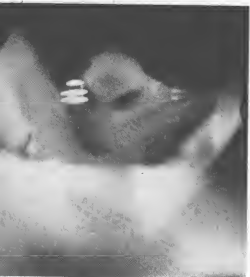
Directed by Laslo Benedek

##### Cast

Jonathan Meredith (Patrick O'Neal), Ethel Meredith (Sara Shane), Philip Exeter Dundee (Ben Wright), Peter Jellicoe (Peter Haskell), James Custer (Dabney Coleman)



Peter Haskell and Patrick O'Neal in the lab.



The Plag.

"Outward stretches the quest for truth. Stars without end, timeless infinities, a billion billion galaxies. Man's imagination reaches out and out, while betimes the farthest reaches of knowledge are found in the smallest places."

"Dundee's Planet" is an ecologically synthesized sample of a world within the star system Wolf 359, implanted in an environmentally regulated greenhouse in the desert lab of Prof.

Meredith. One second equals eleven days in the miniature Dundee world; Meredith introduces human DNA into the ecosystem, and he and assistant Peter Jellicoe settle back to observe the process of evolution with their microscopes and time-delay cameras. Dundee's Planet begins to parallel the most negative aspects of Earth's own development, and also exudes a malignant, wraithlike entity—the "Plag"—that seems to dominate the evil goings-on in the capsule world. It also is able to project itself outside the greenhouse to terrorize Meredith, who sends his wife, Ethel, packing and fires Jellicoe to spare them from the creature's sinister influence. Jellicoe returns with financial backer Dundee—unknowingly saving Meredith when the bright headlights of their car banish the attacking creature—but both are driven away. Dundee's Planet catches up to Earth's nuclear age, and as Meredith is about to witness and record the fate that is Earth's own future, the creature attacks again. This time he's saved by Ethel, who shows up just in time to smash the greenhouse glass, killing Dundee's Planet and forcing the creature to retreat. Meredith's recommendation, as a result of the experiment: Spacemen should not be dispatched to the real Dundee's Planet, where evil waits.

"There is a theory that Earth and sun and galaxy and all the known universes are only a dustmote on some policeman's uniform in some gigantic superworld. Couldn't we be under some supermicroscope, right now?"

#### 41. I, ROBOT

Broadcast November 14, 1964

Written by Robert C. Dennis. Based

on the book *Adam Link, Robot*

by Earl and Otto (E-and-O) Binder

Directed by Leon Benson

##### Cast

Thurman Cutler (Howard Da Silva), Judson Ellis (Leonard Nimoy), Nina Link (Mariana Hill), Adam Link (Red Morgan), D.A. Thomas Coyle (Ford Rainey), Fred (Robert Sorrells), Judge (Ken Drake), Prof. Hebbel (John Hoyt), Sheriff Barclay (Hugh Sanders), Prof. Charles "Doc" Link (Peter Brocco), Evie (Christine Matchett), Mrs. McCrae (Mary Jackson), Truck Driver (John Hudkins), Adam's Voice (John Eliazale)

"God looked upon his world and called

it good, but man was not content. He looked for ways to make it better, and built machines to do the work. But in vain we build the world, unless the builder also grows."

Crochety, misanthropic defense attorney Thurman Cutler is coaxed from retirement to take on a singular case—the defense of a robot, Adam Link, against the charge that it willfully murdered its creator. Testimony reveals that when Adam was activated, he began a trial-and-error learning process much like that of a human child, suggesting that some of his later acts, construed as violent, were merely a



Adam and "stepsister" Nina Link (Mariana Hill).

matter of the robot not realizing his own strength, and misunderstanding complex human thoughts and emotions. But the defense is never fully able to recover from the revelation that Adam read the novel *Frankenstein* while absorbing all the books in Doc Link's library, and the innocent robot is ultimately pronounced guilty. Before he can be hauled away to be dismantled, however, Adam breaks his bonds in order to toss a child from the path of an oncoming truck, getting bashed into scrap metal in the process. Cutler notes sardonically that "that terrible monster won't ever harm anybody again."

"Out of every disaster, a little progress is made. Man will build more robots, and learn how to make them better. And, given enough time, he may learn to do the same for himself." 12

# BAG HAG

When morning was a smudge against the sky, she edged into sight out of some barren crevice, a ghostly scarecrow clutching plastic sacks. "Bag lady," some said. "Bag hag!" snapped others. Names no longer mattered to her limeless bones; she had forgotten her own. Her universe encompassed the littered sidewalk, the bottle-strewn weedy fields. Like some eerie apparition returned for expiation, she limped along the gutters of the town selecting trash as if she sorted treasures. The rising sun became a warning signal. She hitched away, a huge grounded bat, dragging her sacks like broken wings.

—Joseph Payne Brennan



# BEYOND THE ZONE...

## The Way-Out World of Feggo



### Answers to Year of the Rat Quiz (from page 22)

1. "The Rats in the Walls" by H.P. Lovecraft.
  2. *Dracula* by Bram Stoker.
  3. "The Graveyard Rats" by Henry Kuttner.
  4. *The Food of the Gods* by H.G. Wells.
  5. "Rats" by M.R. James.
  6. "The Pit and the Pendulum" by Edgar Allan Poe.
  7. *Ratman's Notebooks* by Stephen Gilbert. (*Willard* was the title of the movie version, but was also the title of the book when it appeared in paperback. Either title counts for the full five points.)
  8. "Nona" by Stephen King.
  9. "Traps" by Gahan Wilson.
  10. 1984 by George Orwell.
- Bonus Movie Question: *The Rats Are Coming! The Werewolves Are Here!*

### Scoring

Give yourself five points for each correctly identified title and another five points for each author. The bonus movie question is worth ten points.

- 65 or more: **Congratulations!** You're the leader of the (rat) pack. You obviously must eat a lot of cheese, so treat yourself to a round of the finest Camembert.
- 40 to 60: You'll never make Mouseketeer, but you did score respectably nonetheless. Help yourself to a half-dozen slices of Swiss.
- 20 to 35: Not so good, but we'll give you a squirt of Cheez Whiz on a cracker.
- 0 to 15: The less said about your score, the better. For you, it's strictly stale Limburger. On a paper plate.

# Screen

(continued from page 14)

Those gorgeous bats. Jones, the woman, and the kid are prelim-slammng along, and in the background are these bats, never mentioned but beautifully present, flopping along silently and ominously, each one big and furry enough to be a menace all on its own—and there are *thousands* of them, a great, thick flock of the things trailing our heroes day and night . . . and so help me, I swear it, *nothing ever happens with the goddamn bats!* The story takes a new turn and that's it. So long, bats. Nobody ever even so much as mentioned them; nobody ever says, "Hey, whew! Am I glad we're rid of those thousands of big, furry bats which have been ominously following us day and night, aren't you? Hoo, boy!"

Then there are the things that don't happen with the characters. Actually, *nothing* happens with the characters. Not with any of them. To them, yes. They get killed, or at least maimed. (Sometimes, in fact, it's hard to tell which. One important villain has a heavy piece of torture equipment fall on him—an important villain, mind—and you really have to be on the alert to notice that it's even happened; and I have no idea at all if it killed him or just discouraged him.)

Not much is done with *any* of the characters. For instance, there's a jimdandy mad priest of Kali who can reach into your skin without breaking it and pull out your heart or presumably any other organ he takes a fancy to, and isn't that a promising knack for a villain to have in his bag of tricks? I mean, can you imagine the horrible possibilities? Ah, but no. One brief threat, and that's it.

Or take this nasty little kid rajah. A spoiled brat with the power of life and death over everyone, and he's bloody used to it. Diamonds and rubies spilling all over him, and the servants of a vile cult at his beck and call to pass on evil teachings or do him ghostly favors. Does the little bastard ever get a chance to do anything interesting? No, he does not. What he does get is to do some uninteresting foolery with a tacky little witch doll and a pin—a game which is (1) entirely beneath his class, (2) a waste of the abundant nastinesses his ancient culture would insure an evil young rajah might have at hand, and (3) dumb.

There are also swell sets, but



Photo by John Stanton

"I know a Monty Python put-on when I see it!" Mark Lenard as Spock's father, Sarek, and Dame Judith Anderson as a Vulcan high priestess in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*.

they're barely glimpsed, rushed by without a look of comprehension from our glazed adventurers. It's like a badly managed world tour, one of those "If this is Tuesday, it must be Belgium" things where exhausted tourists are hustled as quickly as possible from one spot to the next so that their memories are not of this place or that but of buses, airports, and baggage handlers. There's never a chance to really *be* in Belgium; you merely get the chance to say, later on—after checking your dog-eared itinerary just once more to make sure it did actually happen—that you *were* in Belgium. But by then, of course, you're back home in Iowa trying to explain it to a neighbor, and it's all gotten pretty vague.

The oddest thing about *Indiana Jones* is that its constant sense of frantic desperation soon produces boredom and finally indifference. After a while you realize that for its entire length the film will be out of control, spinning wildly down a cliffside, banging side to side on random rocks, reducing all events to a ractety blur. It may be the first fantasy adventure in the *Flashdance* tradition—a kick, man (as they say between sets), but not my kick.

And now we come to *Gremlins*, which is another film I was looking forward to with interest, as it's directed by Joe Dante, who did "It's a Good Life" in the *Twilight Zone* movie and, before that, *The Howling*, which made great fun and games out of werewolfery. Dante has an extremely nice feel for the super-grotesque and can utilize pop images with great elan to underline the

shocks he throws our way. The best thing about *Gremlins* is that it has made lotsa bucks and has therefore moved this talented fellow higher in the Hollywood pecking order, so that in the future, he can tell producers to go fuck themselves if they ever come up to him with something like *Gremlins*; and I hope he will.

I think it was simply the concept of *Gremlins* (written by Chris Columbus, a hard name to forget!) which bogged him down. The basic thesis of it is so unworkable, so awkward, that he may have gotten hopelessly involved in trying to scramble out from under its unresolvable and just couldn't ever get a proper focus on the goddamn movie. Or else, just as bad, he bought the concept and ran with it wholeheartedly, and *that's* why the film's a flailing ruin. It could have happened either way.

The problem with *Gremlins* is that its main character is a fake-looking little creature which is supposed to be one of a race of ancient Chinese pets called mogwai. This entity comes to be called Gizmo, and it manages to combine, to an extraordinary degree, calculated cuteness, obvious borrowings from previously successful toys (fixed and staring googolike eyes, tiny, crippled paws, a Cabbage Patch Kid fixedness of expression), and the unmistakable look of a mass-produced plastic thing.

There is no way to believe in Giz as a living creature, even in this era of ultra-super special effects. It's as if the instruction was to make it look as much as possible like the spin-off toys already for sale in disgusting quantities, perhaps so that

# Screen

the kids who are slated to buy them wouldn't have to make any image transition. The mogwai they've seen in the movie is the mogwai they'll buy in the store. Same difference. "Hey, look, Maw—it even blinks as unconvincingly as Giz!"

It's really a sort of cinematic breakthrough. Those cruddy toys in stacks of boxes in shopping malls all over the country are every bit as much a part of the movie as the celluloid itself. The *Star Wars* spin-offs were spin-offs, but the Gizmos were designed as an integral part of the goddamn show.

But back, now, to the movie; back, at any rate, to that part of the movie you go into a theater (after paying for your ticket, Jack!) and see. There's this lovable father, played quite lovably by Hoyt Axton, who buys his kid a mogwai in a weird Chinatown shop presided over by Keye Luke. Here we are presented with our first absolutely hopeless plot lump. (That's not a bad description of what's wrong with *Gremlins*: it's full of plot lumps, which is to say bits of plot which cannot be swallowed.) It's clear that Giz is clearly a pet for a little tiny baby to coo over, yet Axton's kid, played by Zach Galligan, is a sexually mature twenty-year-old working in a bank. What's he trying to do to that boy, anyhow? Axton only manages to buy the creature by arranging a sneaky deal with Keye's grandson, since Keye is totally against commercial exploitation of mogwai (unlike Warner Brothers).

The grandson tells Axton *never* to let a drop of water fall on the mogwai and *never* to feed it after midnight. Father brings the mogwai back to Kingston Falls, a veritable fantasy fortress of middle-class Americana. When the mogwai crawls partially out of its box (there always seems to be something seriously wrong with its hind legs, incidentally; I'd have taken it to a vet right away), the whole audience save for a couple of grumps such as myself gives out an involuntary "Aaaaaawwwwwww!!!" The mogwai blinks appealingly and makes the cutest little sound.

Okay, so what would you do with the story line next? I won't press you because I can see you're embarrassed. Instead I'll tell you what they do next. The mogwai is, of course, sprinkled with water, and what happens is, he reproduces

asexually by popping other mogwai out from his back in the form of fur balls (unconvincingly, of course, so that it looks just like the one they're hoping to get in shape for that deal with Woolworth's), and these mogwai are just as cute as Giz (altogether, everybody: "Aaaaaawwwwwww!!") except maybe there's something a little odd about them, such as the fact that one of them spits.

So what happens then? Well, sir, what happens then is that, of course, they do get fed after midnight. And then—this is kind of a surprise and the plot lump of the movie, especially if you're a little kid and have fallen in love with how cute these l'il nippers are—they turn into ravaging, reptilian monsters which kill people horribly and eat them in sections like you would at a deli. And they're soon doing it in vast mobs, since they've gotten more water on them and are now a multitude. Find that a little hard to follow? I'll bet you would, particularly if you were that little kid.

So we're supposed to accept that the incredibly lovable mogwai have now turned into ghastly creatures who are killing and eating our fellow townfolk of Kingston Falls. (Such is the flubbery of this film, incidentally, that one is never at all clear about just exactly what the hell is going on. The town is eventually reduced to near ruins, we have seen humans eaten, crushed, and flung, yet in the end only one citizen is actually said to have been killed.) And we are expected to make still another flip-flop, after they've reduced the town and its inhabitants to smoking rubble: we're supposed to look upon them as jolly little elves and chuckle at their antics. And to make it entirely impossible, the little cruds—whether cutesie-pies or scaly fiends—are always less lifelike than a bunch of run-of-the-mill hand puppets.

I think the moment that lost me—the moment where I just knew that Dante, Columbus, the Head Grip, the guy who swept up after the day's shoot, and everybody else associated with *Gremlins* had totally lost track of whatever it was they were up to except trying to sell plastic dolls—was when the action, such as it is, wobbled to a halt while Galligan's girlfriend, played by Phoebe Cates, explained very, very solemnly, with Galligan looking at her with big, sympathetic eyes, that she couldn't

really get into the spirit of Christmas ever since her daddy got stuck in the chimney while playing Santa Claus and she found him there some days later on account of he'd begun to smell bad. Right then I knew it wasn't my fault I wasn't enjoying this stupid movie a tiny little bit; it was their fault.

No, wait. There were two things about *Gremlins* I did like. Both were women. One was Polly Holliday, who does a swell job of playing an evil lady who pushes the folks in Kingston Falls around (and serves the goody folks in Kingston Falls right, say it). The other was Frances Lee McCain as the banker kid's mother, who, in what is by far, far, far the best scene in the movie, destroys a whole bunch of gremlins efficiently and mercilessly with kitchen appliances. Would that she'd creamed l'il 'Giz right at the start.

Finally, we have *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Now I must admit I didn't approach this one with much hope, outside of looking forward to seeing more of *Twilight Zone's* cover girl (I guess I've got a thing about Klingons), but you could have knocked me over with a feather when, oh, around the start of the second half, I realized *Star Trek III* was a Monty Python production! It doesn't say so anywhere in the ads, mind, and it isn't mentioned anywhere in the film's publicity handouts, but you can't fool me—I know a Monty Python put-on when I see it!

I mean, how about Dame Judith Anderson as a Vulcan high priestess, hah? Talk about comic genius! (Actually, maybe it's only the Vulcan stuff that's Monty Python. Maybe they brought Python in at the end to try to save the movie.) Or shooting the entire Vulcan footage on location in Las Vegas? What about that? Brilliant? You bet your sweet bippie, sweetheart!

One of the most astonishing aspects of the film is what it says about future technology. Judging from the look of the computer monitors, they're strictly at the Apple II stage. And the Klingons don't seem to be much further ahead; they still rely heavily on 1980s-style tape cassettes. All in all, *Star Trek III* paints a rather odd picture of the future.

And I understand they actually plan to do another. **BT**





# Escape Clause

by Rod Serling

*The original  
television script  
first aired on CBS-TV  
November 6, 1959*

## CAST

Walter Bedeker.....David Wayne  
Mr. Cadwallader.....Thomas Gomez  
Ethel Bedeker.....Virginia Christine  
Adjuster #1.....Dick Wilson  
Adjuster #2.....Joe Flynn  
Judge.....George Baxter  
Doctor.....Raymond Bailey  
Cooper.....Wendell Holmes  
Guard.....Nesdon Booth  
Subway Attendant.....Allan Lurie  
Janitor.....Paul E. Burns

## ACT ONE

FADE IN.  
1. EXT. SKY NIGHT  
Shot of the sky ... the various  
nebulae and planet bodies stand  
out in sharp, sparkling relief. As  
the CAMERA begins a SLOW  
PAN across the heavens—  
NARRATOR'S VOICE

There is a sixth dimension  
beyond that which is known  
to man. It is a dimension as  
vast as space, and as timeless  
as infinity. It is the middle  
ground between light and  
shadow—and it lies between  
the pit of man's fears and the  
sunlight of his knowledge. This  
is the dimension of imagination.  
It is an area that might  
be called the Twilight Zone.  
The CAMERA has begun to PAN  
DOWN until it passes the horizon  
and is flush on the OPENING  
SHOT. (EACH WEEK THE OPENING  
SHOT OF THE PLAY.)

2. EXT. STREET  
APARTMENT BUILDING  
DISSOLVE TO.

3. INT. SMALL  
APARTMENT BEDROOM

Walter Bedeker sits up in bed  
bundled in a bathrobe. He's  
reading a book, the cover of  
which faces the camera: Five  
Thousand Common Ailments to  
be Treated at Home. He reads  
voraciously and intensely. From  
the other room there's the sound  
of hammering on metal which  
Bedeker looks up to listen to with  
a kind of martyrish aggravation.  
Then he looks at his wife, Ethel, a  
mousy little woman who sits  
kneeling in the corner. She smiles  
at him and he looks away  
disgustfully. The pounding  
continues and added to it now is  
the wheezing and echoing thud  
of a steam heater.



ETHEL

(puts her knitting down)

Are you comfortable, darling?

BEDEKER

Am I what?

(he throws the book aside)

Oh, certainly I'm comfortable.

I'm on the verge of pneumonia and that ape of a janitor is out there smashing at my brain and ruining my sleep. First he tries to freeze me to death and then he rides to destroy my brain.

(his voice slides up several octaves. He gets out of bed, starts to walk across the room)

Well, I won't stand for it! If I'm to die, at least I'll die in comfort! In peace!

(he goes to the door of the living room and opens it and shouts at the janitor who is working on the radiator)

You! Ape!

CUT TO.

#### 4. INT. LIVING ROOM

The janitor looks around tiredly, used to the outbursts and the man.

JANITOR

You want heat, Mr. Bedeker

—you got heat!

(he puts his hands over the radiator then jerks them away at the heat of it)

In about twenty minutes it'll be about one hundred and five in here.

(he throws his tools in a bag, starts out, turns, looks at Bedeker)

So if you do die, Bedeker—and you go where you're goin'—as far as the temperature goes, you ain't gonna be able to tell the difference!

BEDEKER

(livid with rage)

Ape—get out!

The janitor exits, shutting the door behind him. Bedeker clutches his heart and then feels of his pulse. He leans on Ethel who starts to take him haltingly back into the bedroom.

BEDEKER

Quick, Ethel—get the doctor.

Tell him to hurry. I don't think I have much time!

DISSOLVE TO.

#### 5. INT. THE BEDROOM

Bedeker is in bed. The doctor is studying a thermometer near a lamp. Bedeker staring at him with a mixture of petulant impatience and desperate fright.

NARRATOR

Witness Mr. Walter Bedeker, age forty-four. Afraid of the following: death, disease, other people, germs, draft, and everything else. He has one interest in life—and that's Walter Bedeker. One preoccupation—the life and well-being of Walter Bedeker; one abiding concern about society—that if Walter Bedeker should die, how will it survive without him?

FADE TO BLACK.

BILLBOARD

FIRST COMMERCIAL

#### 6. LONG SHOT LOOKING ACROSS AT BEDEKER FROM BEHIND THE DOCTOR

BEDEKER

(tartly)

Well?

The doctor shakes the thermometer, takes out a small

bottle of alcohol, and starts to cleanse it.

BEDEKER

I asked you a question, Doctor. How bad is it?

#### 7. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD THE DOCTOR

As he approaches the bed. He puts the thermometer back in its case.

DOCTOR

It isn't bad at all. As a matter of fact, it's quite good. You have no temperature. Pressure normal. Respiration normal. Heart action normal. No infection. Throat clear. Nasal passages clear. Ears clear.

BEDEKER

What about the pains in my back and side? What about four sleepless nights in a row? (and then with a burst of triumphant accusation)

What about that?

The doctor looks down at Bedeker in the bed, smiles, and shakes his head.

DOCTOR

What about that? "That," Mr. Bedeker, is psychosomatic.

BEDEKER

Psychosomatic? You're trying to tell me that I'm sick only in the mind?

DOCTOR

That's my considered opinion, Mr. Bedeker. There's nothing wrong with you except the ailments you manufacture for yourself. Your pains are imaginary. Your inability to sleep is a case of nerves—but nothing more. In short, Mr. Bedeker, you're a very healthy man.

Bedeker smiles sadly and looks at the wall as if it were a person, jerking his head back in the direction of the doctor, making a motion toward him with a limp hand and then talks to the wall.

BEDEKER

See? This is a doctor. Four years pre-med. Four years medical school. Two years internship. Two years residency. And what is he? I ask you, what is he?

(he screams this out)

A quack!

The doctor continues to smile and shake his head, starts to put his stethoscope and few other

things back in his bag. At this moment Bedeker's wife enters. She looks a little surreptitiously over to the bed and then moves the doctor away to whisper to him in a dying-room sotto.

ETHEL

What's the prognosis, doctor?

BEDEKER

(from the bed))

Don't ask him! The man's an idiot.

ETHEL

(turns around her face in anguish, in a low voice)

Walter, darling, don't excite yourself.

BEDEKER

(loudly)

And don't whisper!

(to the doctor)

You're looking at half of my troubles right there. This woman. This awful woman who runs around whispering all day long to make me think I'm sick even if I'm not.

(then suddenly remembering)

And I am I'm lying here at death's door and who's whispering me out? That quack and this whispering woman without a mind.

DOCTOR

(jovially)

I'll call tomorrow, Mr. Bedeker.

BEDEKER

There'll be no need to call. Just come on over with the death certificate and fill it out.

ETHEL

(her face looking like a pudding that has fallen in the oven.

piteously)

Oh, Walter.

BEDEKER

Don't drench me with those crocodile tears of yours, idiot! (to the doctor)

She'd be so happy to get rid of me. I just can't tell you!

DOCTOR

Goodbye, Mr. Bedeker.

(at the door he pauses)

Take care of yourself.

He shakes his head, smiles, and goes out, followed by Ethel.

## 8. TRACK SHOT WITH THEM

As they walk through the small living room. Ethel puts out her hand to touch his elbow as they reach the door.

ETHEL

Doctor, how is he?

DOCTOR

(laughs softly, looks down at the little woman)

Mrs. Bedeker, your husband is one of the healthiest patients I have.

ETHEL

(shakes her head dubiously)

But he's sick most of the time.

He won't let me open a window in the house. He says for every cubic foot of air there are eight million, nine-hundred thousand germs.

DOCTOR

(throws back his head and laughs)

He's probably right.

ETHEL

And he's just quit his job. The fifth job he's quit since the first of the year. He says they make him work in a draft.

The doctor stops laughing to look down at the little woman, then he suddenly feels an acme of pity for her.

DOCTOR

I suppose I'm oversimplifying it when I say there's nothing wrong with him, because in a sense there really is. This constant worrying about himself is an illness of a sort. Has he always been this frightened?

ETHEL

Ever since I can remember. When he was courting me he told me he was in the last stages of TB and only had a week to live.

(she looks away reminiscently and sadly)

I only married him because I felt so sorry for him—

(then she starts and jerks upright realizing what she's said, humbly)

Oh, I didn't mean—

DOCTOR

I'll give you a call tomorrow.

(he opens the door and then looks at her a little concernedly)

I don't think it would be a bad idea if you took some vitamins yourself. You look run-down. Mrs. Bedeker, and a little too pale.

BEDEKER'S VOICE

(from the bedroom, shrieking)

Ethel. There's a draft in here and I feel a coma coming on.

ETHEL

(hurriedly)

Yes, darling, I'll be right in.

DOCTOR

Now you remember about those vitamins.

(he takes out a pad and a pencil and jots down a note)

Get some of these from the drugstore. Goodbye,

Mrs. Bedeker.

He turns and goes out shutting the door.

## 9. INT. BEDROOM

### SHOT ACROSS THE BED

Taking in Bedeker's profile and looking toward the door as it opens and Ethel hurries in.

BEDEKER

(points a weak finger to motion toward the window)

Freezing air blasting into the room.

Ethel goes over to the window. It is open about a fifth of an inch. She puts it down.

BEDEKER

(his eyes half closed)

Do you know how many germs come in one cubic foot of air, Ethel? Eight million, nine-hundred thousand. I know you want me gone and that's why you leave windows open all over the place, but as a point of decency—couldn't you do it more subtly?

ETHEL

(goes over to his bedside)

The doctor said you needed some air. He said it was stuffy in here.

## 10. CLOSE SHOT

### THE PRESCRIPTION IN HER HAND

Bedeker grabs it out of her fingers.

## 11. TWO SHOT

### ETHEL AND BEDEKER

BEDEKER

What's this? Where'd you get this? I'm not sick but he gives you a prescription for medicine for me. Nothing wrong with me, he says, but while I lie here helpless, he's out there telling you that I've got a life expectancy of twenty minutes. Don't deny it. Ethel. I smelled the collusion the moment he left the room.

# Escape Clause

**ETHEL**  
(gently)

It was for vitamins, Walter, for me.

**BEDEKER**

(bolts upright in bed)

Vitamins? For you? I lie here while the life seeps out and that quack prescribes vitamins for you.

(he looks at the wall again and nods familiarly at it)

See? I'm dying and she gets vitamins.

He breaks off into a spasm of coughing. Ethel tries to pat his back but he pushes her away. Then very limply and weakly he lies back down in the bed, shakes his head, closes his eyes.

**BEDEKER**

Never mind, Ethel. Go on, get out of here. Let me die in peace.

**ETHEL**

All right, Walter—  
His eyes open.

**BEDEKER**

What?

**ETHEL**

(dead-tired)

I meant I'll let you alone.

Walter, so you can take a little nap.

**BEDEKER**

(jumps up, sits on the edge of the bed)

I can't nap.

(then he looks at her)

Why does a man have to die anyway? I asked you a question, Ethel. Why does a man have to die?

(he gets out of bed, goes over to the window, checks for drafts)

The world goes on for millions and millions of years and how long is a man's life?

(he holds two fingers together)

This much. A drop. A microscopic fragment.

(he turns to her)

Why can't a man live five hundred years? Or a thousand years? Why does he have to die almost the moment he's born?

**ETHEL**

I don't know, dear.

**BEDEKER**

No, you wouldn't. Go on, get out of here, Ethel.

**ETHEL**

Yes, dear.



She goes out and closes the door. Bedeker stares at the door viciously and goes back to sit on the bed. He feels of his head, takes his own pulse, coughs while feeling of various spots around his chest. Then he rises and walks over to the dresser to study his face in the mirror.

**BEDEKER**

It's a crime for a man to live such a short span of years. A crime. What I wouldn't give! What I wouldn't give to live a decent number of years. Two hundred. Three hundred.

He turns away from the mirror.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS him over to the bed then SWEEPS RIGHT for a shot of the mirror again. There in it is the face of a stranger in a loud suit, bow tie, a small stetson tilted rakishly over to one side.

**MAN IN THE MIRROR**

Why not five or six hundred?

CUT TO.

## 12. CLOSE SHOT

### BEDEKER ON THE BED

**BEDEKER**

Why not? Or a thousand. What a miserable thing to contemplate. A handful of years and then eternity in a casket down under the ground. The dark, cold ground.

CUT TO.

## 13. MAN IN THE MIRROR

**MAN IN THE MIRROR**

With worms yet.

## 14. SHOT BEDEKER

**BEDEKER**

Of course with worms.

Then suddenly his eyes go wide, his head moves to stare across at

the mirror and then in the opposite direction across the room.

## 15. CLOSE SHOT THE MAN CADWALLADER

Cadwallader sits in a chair smiling at Bedeker.

**CADWALLADER**

I subscribe to your views wholly, Mr. Bedeker. I mean wholly.

## 16. TWO SHOT

**BEDEKER**

(staring at him)

I'm delighted. And who might you be?

**CADWALLADER**

Cadwallader's my name. At least I'm using it this month. Has a nice feeling on the tongue.

Bedeker looks at the door and then to the window. The camera cuts to each and then back to Bedeker.

**BEDEKER**

How'd you get in?

**CADWALLADER**

I've never been gone. I've been in here for some time.

(he rises)

I'll be brief, Mr. Bedeker. You look like a man with a nose for a bargain. I'd like to make a proposition to you. We each have something the other wants—and that seems a relatively solid basis for a bargain.

**BEDEKER**

(puzzled)

Do we? What in the world do you have that I could possibly want?

CADWALLADER

(smiles, lights a cigarette, sits back relaxedly surveying the other man)

Oh, many things, Mr. Bedeker. You'd be surprised. Many things. Varied and delightful.

BEDEKER

(scratches his jaw thoughtfully)

And what do I have that could remotely interest you? Cadwallader puts on a smile so deprecating as to be more of a grimace.

CADWALLADER

Actually a minor item. Smaller than minor. Insignificant. Microscopic.

(he holds up two little fingers)

Teensy-weensy.

The two men's eyes lock.

BEDEKER

What did you say your name was?

CADWALLADER

What's in a name, Mr. Bedeker, really? Just a question of semantics—language. A stretch of words, really. For example, what is it you want? You want an extended life span. You want a few hundred years to play around with. Some people would call it immortality of a sort. But why give it that kind of description? Why make it sound so imposing? Let's call it—the two of us—let's call it some additional free time. After all, what are a few hundred years or a few thousand?

BEDEKER

A few ... thousand?

CADWALLADER

Or five thousand or ten thousand? What is it in the scheme of things? The world will go on ad infinitum so what's a few thousand years more or less, give or take, add or subtract?

BEDEKER

(now very wary, rises, studying the man)

And this little item that I'm to give you in exchange, what do we call that?

CADWALLADER

(gives him a little Santa Claus wink)

What do we call that? We could call it a little piece of your makeup. A little crumb

off the crust of your structure. A fragment of an atom from your being. Or a—

### 17. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

BEDEKER

Or a soul?

### 18. CLOSE SHOT CADWALLADER

Who smiles beatifically.

CADWALLADER

Or what! After all, what is it? And when you're gone thousands of years hence—what do you need it for?

### 19. TWO SHOT

BEDEKER

You're the devil!

CADWALLADER

(bows slightly, his eyes downcast with great modesty)

I'm at your service.

(then he looks up)

How about it, Mr. Bedeker?

Why not? You'd deed me over your so-called soul and I give you immortality. Life everlasting—or as long as you want it to be everlasting. And indestructibility, Mr. Bedeker. Complete indestructibility. Nothing can hurt you.

BEDEKER

Nothing can hurt me? And I live forever?

CADWALLADER

(smiles)

Why not? Certainly forever. Again, Mr. Bedeker, just terms. And everything's relative. For you it's forever—for me it's a walk around the block, but we're both satisfied.

(then a pause)

Think of it. To be without fear of dying. To be indestructible. Invincible. Not to have to worry about disease, accidents, pestilence, war, famine, anything. Governments and institutions disintegrate. People die. But Walter Bedeker goes on and on.

BEDEKER

(softly, half to himself)

Walter Bedeker goes on and on!

He turns smiling toward the other man and then suddenly the smile fades and he looks very wary, like a New England horse trader.

BEDEKER

(softly)

Mr. Cadwallader, about this soul—you say I won't miss it?

CADWALLADER

You'll never know it's gone.

BEDEKER

And I'll go on and on, quite unable to die, you say?

CADWALLADER

Quite.

BEDEKER

No tricks? No hidden clauses? I'll just live as long as I want to live—is that it?

CADWALLADER

That's it. That's precisely it.

### 20. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

As he looks off thoughtfully, rises, walks over to the dresser mirror, studies his face.

BEDEKER

How about my appearance?

### 21. TWO SHOT

CADWALLADER

I'm afraid I can't do much about that—

(and then hurriedly)

What I mean is—you should look pretty much the same.

BEDEKER

But in five hundred years—I don't want to look like any dried-up old prune.

CADWALLADER

Oh, Mr. Bedeker, you drive a mean bargain. A most difficult bargain, but—

(he makes a gesture of resignation)

You'll find me a cooperative ... (a pause while he smiles apologetically)

Man? We'll throw this into the bargain. Whatever aging takes place of your features will be more or less imperceptible.

BEDEKER

(turns from the mirror)

Mr. Cadwallader, I believe we're close to making a deal.

CADWALLADER

(starts to rub his hands together then stops abruptly, and puts them behind him)

Mr. Bedeker, you'll never regret this. Not to your dying day—(and then seeing Bedeker look up sharply)

Which by rights should not be for several thousand years.

# Escape Clause

(he butts the cigarette out, picks at his teeth for a moment)

There is something—

BEDEKER

Ah hah, ah hah, ah hah! Now it comes out, huh?

CADWALLADER

For your benefit I can assure you.

(He takes out a document of about six pages, thumbs through it briefly, pensively)

Article ninety-three. Here it is, right here.

He points to it. Turns the page around so that Bedeker can see it.

BEDEKER

What about it? Read it to me.

CADWALLADER

I'll just give you the sense of it. It's in the nature of an escape clause.

(then he points to Bedeker)

Your escape clause.

(then he mumbles through the clause)

Whereas the party of the first part, upon due notification to the party of the second part—  
(he looks up)

Well, I'll just give it to you, thumbnail. It's simply that if you get tired of living, Mr. Bedeker, you can exercise the clause by calling on me and requesting your...

(he smiles)

Oh, there goes the terms again—Your demise? At which point I shall see to it that you are given a rapid and uncomplicated—

(he holds up his hands wagging his fingers for a term)

Departure?

BEDEKER

(smiles)

I can assure you, Mr. Cadwallader, that I'm not the sort of man to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. When you talk immortality to me, brother, I mean immortality. You're going to have a long, long wait.

CADWALLADER

(again the slight bow)

Mr. Bedeker, nothing will please me more.

BEDEKER

Then I think we've got a deal! Cadwallader arches an eyebrow, smiles, sucks in the sides of his

mouth, holds up his hand where suddenly a rubber stamp appears, brings his hand down in an arc on the front page of the contract. He straightens up, suddenly, uncomfortably, moves a finger through his collar.

CADWALLADER

You sure keep it hot in here.

## 22. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

The paper fluttering to the floor and lying there smoking.

## 23. CLOSE SHOT

### BEDEKER'S HAND

Trembling slightly, reaching for it, picking it up. CAMERA PULLS BACK for a:

## 24. MED. CLOSE SHOT

### BEDEKER

As he reads the contract.

BEDEKER

I think it seems to be pretty much in order—  
He looks up.

## 25. PAN SHOT AROUND

### THE ROOM

It's empty.

## 26. MED. SHOT BEDEKER

He looks down at the document again, goes over, opens a drawer of the dresser, sticks the paper in. Then squaring his shoulders, goes over to the door, opens it, starts into the living room.

## 27. INT. LIVING ROOM

Ethel is approaching him with a glass of milk on a tray. He grabs the glass, swigs half of it, throws the glass over his shoulder, strides over to the radiator. It's hissing and steaming. Bedeker looks at both his hands then plants them down on the red-hot radiator. Ethel screams. Bedeker turns to her grinning and holds out his hands to her. They're steaming at the fingertips but he's unhurt.

BEDEKER

Witness, my dear, the new  
Walter Bedeker!  
He goes back into the bedroom.

## 28. INT. BEDROOM

On a tray on the dresser is an assortment of medicines of every kind and every color. He picks up the tray, walks over to the window, opens the window with

a free hand and throws the tray out and turns back into the room, dusting off his hands.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE ON:

## 29. FILM CLIP

### AIRPLANE CRASH

Over the flaming wreckage we superimpose a headline which reads: "23 Die in Air Crash. One Survivor, Walter Bedeker." We ZOOM IN on the line "One Survivor, Walter Bedeker." This remains on screen while the headlines and film clips behind it change to "bus crash," "automobile crash," "explosion." But always in the foreground is the headline, "One Survivor, Walter Bedeker." Clear super and

DISSOLVE TO:

## 30. INT. SUBWAY STATION

### PAN SHOT

Across the faces of a group of four people as they stand on the platform waiting for the subway. A few feet from them stands Walter Bedeker, looking impassively calm.

CUT TO:

## 31. FILM CLIP HEAD-ON SHOT OF A ROARING SUBWAY TRAIN

Heading toward the camera.

CUT TO:

## 32. MED. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

As he wets his lips expectantly.

CUT TO:

## 33. FILM CLIP THE SUBWAY TRAIN

Just heading into the station.

CUT TO:

## 34. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

Bedeker jumps headlong onto the tracks.

CUT TO:

## 35. DIFFERENT ANGLES THE ONLOOKERS

As they scream and close their eyes. Over their faces pass the shadow and light of the roaring train as it rushes by. Then the noise gradually diminishes and they slowly uncover their eyes.

CUT TO:



### 36. MED. LONG SHOT THE SUBWAY PLATFORM

Facing the tracks as Bedeker climbs up over the side back into their midst. He dusts himself off. A subway attendant pushes his way through the people, stops and stares at Bedeker.  
SUBWAY ATTENDANT  
(gulps)

You ... how did you ... how come you ...

BEDEKER  
(pushes the man's arm away)  
Go away. Go get your claims adjuster.

DISSOLVE TO.

### 37. INT. BEDEKER LIVING ROOM NIGHT

As the door opens Bedeker enters with a claims adjuster. Ethel rushes toward them.

CLAIMS ADJUSTER  
He's all right, ma'am.  
(and then hurriedly)

Aren't you, Mr. Bedeker? You're all right, aren't you?

Bedeker turns to him haughtily, snaps his fingers. The claims adjuster takes a paper out of his pocket and a fountain pen, looks around and then puts the paper on a table.

CLAIMS ADJUSTER  
You want to sign this now, Mr. Bedeker?

BEDEKER  
(goes over and looks at the paper)

Five thousand dollars?  
CLAIMS ADJUSTER  
(looks a little uncomfortable)

Well, considering that you're not even scratched, Mr. Bedeker, I think the company's being very fair—

BEDEKER

Just keep your mouth shut, will you? I'll sign it. And I can expect a check by tomorrow?

CLAIMS ADJUSTER

First thing in the morning, Mr. Bedeker. Just sign right here.

BEDEKER  
(looks down at the paper again and mumbles as he reads it)

Waives all claims ... receipt of sum ... indemnifies company ... all right!  
(he signs with a flourish)  
He hands the pen back to the man. The adjuster sticks it in his pocket, nods to them both, and then opens the door, about to go out. Standing there poised to knock is another adjuster. The two men look at one another.  
ADJUSTER

Hello, Steve.  
ADJUSTER TWO  
Hello, Jack.

(he looks down at the other man's briefcase)

You too, huh?

ADJUSTER  
(nods)  
Yeah, subway accident.

ADJUSTER TWO  
(takes a deep breath, sighs)  
Bus here!

BEDEKER  
(pushing past the first adjuster, opens the door wide, points to adjuster one)

You—out!  
(his finger travels over in an arc to point at the man standing outside)

You—in!  
The two men exchange a sad nod and look of mutual compassion as they pass one another coming in and out of the room. The door closes.

BEDEKER  
You have my check, I presume?

ADJUSTER TWO  
Ten thousand dollars.  
Mr. Bedeker. If you'll sign right here for it—

He takes out a pen. Bedeker's eyes gleam, takes pen and form, and then slips the check out of the adjuster's hand as he is about to walk across the room with it. He sits down and starts to write.

DISSOLVE TO.

### 38. INT. BEDEKER LIVING ROOM

Bedeker stands at the window staring out at the street. He turns briefly to stare at Ethel, who surveys him with infinite sadness.  
BEDEKER

Fourteen accidents. Now wouldn't you think that there should be an element of thrill in fourteen accidents? Fourteen accidents in which you know nothing can happen to you?

ETHEL  
(irresolutely)

I guess so, Walter.

BEDEKER  
(goes to the window to stare out)  
Well, it's a fact. There should be an excitement to this sort of thing.

(he turns to her not really looking at her)

Well, there isn't. It's dull. It's absolutely without the remotest bit of excitement. In short, I'm bored with it.

ETHEL  
(piteously)

Walter dear, you should count your blessings.

BEDEKER  
You should shut your mouth. You look for all the world like a small grey mouse looking for a piece of cheese.

ETHEL  
"Walter, you can be so terribly cruel.

BEDEKER  
(turns back to the window)  
Ethel, please shut your mouth.

### 39. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

As he stands at the window. His words are musing.

BEDEKER  
I swear he's cheated me. Mortal-shmortal. What's the good of it when there aren't any kicks? Any excitement at all.

# Escape Clause

## 40. MEDIUM SHOT

ETHEL  
(rises)

Walter, do you feel all right?

BEDEKER

(completely ignoring her)

At least when I was concerned about my health there was an element of risk there. I mean...

He looks around the room, then strides across over to the bathroom.

## 41. INT. BATHROOM

He opens up the medicine chest and starts removing little bottles.

BEDEKER

Iodine. Rubbing alcohol. Have you got any starch?

ETHEL

Starch?

BEDEKER

Of course starch.

We can see her in the bathroom mirror going into the kitchen and bringing back a bottle.

CUT TO.

## 42. LIVING ROOM

Bedeker takes all three bottles, empties their contents into a glass, and then drinks it.

## 43. CLOSE SHOT ETHEL

Her face turns white and she sits down.

## 44. TWO SHOT

BEDEKER

(puts the almost empty glass down and wets his lips)

See? What I just drank should kill a dozen men. To me it tastes like lemonade.

ETHEL

(softly)

Walter?

BEDEKER

What?

ETHEL

What's it all about?

BEDEKER

(looks up at her)

You really want to know?

ETHEL nods

BEDEKER

All right. I'll tell you. I am immortal. I am indestructible. I made a pact with a guy named Cadwallader who's given me immortality in exchange for my soul. More succinctly than that I couldn't put it

ETHEL

(gasps and turns white)

Why don't you just sit there? I'll make some tea and then we'll call the doctor.

BEDEKER

(on his feet again)

You will not make tea and you will not call the doctor. If you had any imagination at all you could tell me what there is I might do to get a little excitement out of it all. I've been in subway crashes, bus accidents, major fires, and now I drank poison.

(a pause)

Nothing! You know what I've been thinking? I've been thinking I'll go up to the roof and I'll throw myself down the light well. Smack dab through the light well. Fourteen stories down just for the experience of it.

ETHEL

(close to tears)

Oh, Walter, please.

BEDEKER

Ethel darling, shut your mouth and get out of my way.

He pushes her aside, opens the door.

CUT TO.

## 45. EXT. ROOF NIGHT

As Bedeker comes out of it, followed by a piteously wailing Ethel.

ETHEL

Please, Walter. Please, darling.

BEDEKER

Ethel, go down in the tub and leave me alone. I'm going

head first down the light well.

Get out of my way.

He goes over to the edge of the light well and looks down.

## 46. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN THE LIGHT WELL

It's a long, frightening, abrupt descent and even Bedeker has to stop thoughtfully.

## 47. CLOSE TWO SHOT BEDEKER AND ETHEL

She grabs his arm.

ETHEL

Walter, please.

He sidesteps.

BEDEKER

Will you get out of—

Ethel, screaming, loses her balance and topples over the

edge and goes smashing through the light well.

## 48. FLASH SHOT LOOKING DOWN FROM THE ROOF INTO INT. OF THE BUILDING

Ethel's scream further and further distant. Scream ends abruptly. Lights start to go on in floor after floor and there's a buildup murmur of voices.

## 49. TIGHT CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

As his eyes close tightly and then slowly open. A little timidly he goes over to the edge and looks down, then scratches his jaw thoughtfully.

BEDEKER

(softly)

I wonder what it felt like!

## 50. TRACK SHOT WITH HIM

As he goes back toward the roof door. He's obviously deep in thought and the germ of an idea has been planted and is germinating. By the time he reaches the apartment door he's absolutely beaming. He hurries inside.

## 51. INT. APARTMENT

As Bedeker goes over to the telephone, picks it up, dials a number.

BEDEKER

Operator, get me the police, please. Immediately. It's an emergency.

(a pause)

Hello? Is this the police station?

This is Walter Bedeker. Eleven North Seventh Street. That's right. Apartment fourteen-B.

Will you please come over here right away. No, no trouble. I just killed my wife. That's right. Yes. I'll stay right here. Goodbye.

(he puts the receiver down, turns thoughtfully to stand there stock still then he rubs his jaw)

We'll try this for an experience!  
DISSOLVE TO.

## 52. INT. CELL BLOCK NIGHT

PAN SHOT DOWN the various cells until we're outside Bedeker's. He sits on the single chair in the cell, his feet propped up against the wall, his hands behind his head whistling softly. There's an



echo of footsteps down the corridor outside that grow louder as they approach.

GUARD'S VOICE

Right in here, Mr. Cooper. No longer than fifteen minutes, please.

CAMERA PANS OVER to shot of the guard opening the cell door. Cooper, the lawyer, with his briefcase, goes inside the cell door. It's locked behind him. Bedeker looks up a little bored.

BEDEKER

Cooper the legal beagle. And how are you?

COOPER

(puts the briefcase down, sits on the cot)

How am I? I'm miserable, Mr. Bedeker. I've been miserable since I took your case. I've had tough clients before but nobody like you.

BEDEKER

(insouciantly)

Really? What disturbs you?

COOPER

What disturbs me is that in five days of a trial you've acted like a man desperate to get convicted. When I examine you you shut up like a clam. When the prosecuting attorney examines you you act like you were betting on him to win the case.

(he leans forward intensely)

Now look, Bedeker, this is the goods here. Tomorrow's the last day. There'll be the summing up and it'll go to the jury and as things stand now, you don't have chance number one.

Bedeker lights a cigarette, blows out the smoke.

BEDEKER

That a fact?

COOPER

That is a fact! Now tomorrow this is what I want us to do—

He starts to open the briefcase and pull out papers. Bedeker looks from him to the briefcase, bored.

BEDEKER

Cooper, do me a favor, will you? Put it away.

COOPER

(looks up)

How's that?

BEDEKER

Put it away.

COOPER



(stares at him for a long, unbelieving moment)

Bedeker, did you get what I was trying to tell you? You're about twelve hours away from a guilty verdict to a charge of first-degree murder.

BEDEKER

(clucking)

Tch, tch, tch. And what will the penalty be?

COOPER

The penalty in this state for first-degree murder is death in the electric chair.

BEDEKER

Death in the electric chair! He taps his fingers on the side of the chair, then examines his nails.

COOPER

(almost beyond himself, shouts)

Bedeker—

BEDEKER

Death in the electric chair. And if I were in California?

COOPER

What?

BEDEKER

How would they try to kill me if I lived in California?

COOPER

Capital punishment there is the gas chamber, but I don't see why—

BEDEKER

(interrupting)

And in Kansas?

COOPER

In Kansas it's hanging. But I'm gonna tell you something.

Bedeker—

BEDEKER

(rises)

No, Mr. Cooper. I'm gonna tell you something. The only thing they'll get for their troubles if they try to electrocute me is a high electricity bill. Good night. Mr. Cooper. See you in court.

53. CLOSE SHOT COOPER

As he slowly shakes his head.

rises, goes to the cell door, taps on it. The guard's footsteps are heard approaching.

COOPER

(turns toward Bedeker)

I don't know, Bedeker. I just don't understand you. The alienist says you're sane and you say you killed your wife but way down deep I know you didn't. So tomorrow when I sum up for you I'm going to lead from terrible weakness.

(he shrugs hopelessly)

But I'll do the best I can.

#### 54. TWO SHOT

Bedeker exhales a long cloud of smoke then drops the cigarette on the floor, deliberately butts it out with his foot.

BEDEKER

Mr. Cooper, really, don't bother! DISSOLVE TO:

#### 55. INT. COURT ROOM

##### CLOSE SHOT A GAVEL

Being pounded on the judge's desk. PULL BACK for a shot of the judge.

#### 56. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

Smirking as he rises.

#### 57. CLOSE SHOT THE JUDGE

Mr. Bedeker, you've been tried and found guilty of murder in the first degree. Have you anything to say before the court pronounces sentence upon you?

#### 58. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

As he looks skyward like a man being put upon.

BEDEKER

I don't have anything to say, your honor. Not a thing.

#### 59. CLOSE SHOT THE JUDGE

Then the court sentences you



to imprisonment in the State Penitentiary for the rest of your natural life.

There's a bustle and murmur of voices.

#### 60. CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER

Yawning. He looks around to see his lawyer standing there.

COOPER

(grabs his hand)

I was sure we could do it, Bedeker.

BEDEKER

How's that?

COOPER

I knew we could get you off without a death penalty. If I do say so myself, old boy, I gave that summation everything I had.

BEDEKER

Wait a minute ... wait a minute ...

(then shouting)

Wait a minute!!

The lawyer turns to him.

BEDEKER

Does this mean that—

COOPER

This means that you're not going to an electric chair. You've been given life instead. You're a very fortunate man, Mr. Bedeker.

BEDEKER

(still not grasping it en toto, but the sense of it beginning to permeate)

Life? Life imprisonment?

Then suddenly and shockingly he drops down out of sight to land on the floor, his eyes staring wide open, sweat appearing on his forehead, his mouth wide open.

DISSOLVE TO.

#### 61. INT. CELL

Bedeker stands leaning against the far wall. There's the sound of the guard's footsteps. We see his shadow approach the door, then pause. Then there's the sound of keys. Bedeker turns slowly.

#### 62. MED. CLOSE SHOT THE GUARD

He's carrying a tray of food. GUARD

This is your last meal with us, Mr. Bedeker. They'll be taking you to the penitentiary tomorrow morning.

BEDEKER

The penitentiary. For life.

The guard opens the door, lays the tray down.

GUARD

That's right. For life. But look at it philosophically, Mr. Bedeker. What's life? Forty years? Forty-five years. You can do that standing on your head.

He goes out, locks the door, and we hear his voice disappearing down the corridor.

GUARD'S VOICE

That's all. Forty, forty-five years.

Maybe not even that much—Bedeker walks over to stare down at the tray of food.

BEDEKER

(softly)

Forty or forty-five years.

Then filtered in his subconscious he hears Cadwallader's voice. CADWALLADER'S VOICE (filtered and echoing)

After all, what are a few hundred or a few thousand? Or five thousand or ten thousand? What is it in the scheme of things?

His laughter builds up to a detonating cacophony of deafening sound. Bedeker's face twists with agony. He shuts his eyes tight and slams his hands to his ears and he screams.

BEDEKER

No! No, no, no!

Then the cell is in utter silence. Bedeker slowly opens his eyes and removes his hands from his ears.

#### 63. MED. LONG SHOT LOOKING TOWARD BEDEKER

But between him and the CAMERA is the indistinct, ghostly, transparent figure of Cadwallader.

CADWALLADER'S VOICE

Mr. Bedeker?

BEDEKER

Yes?

CADWALLADER'S VOICE

About the escape clause. Care to utilize it now?

#### 64. VERY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT BEDEKER'S FACE

As he slowly nods.

CADWALLADER'S VOICE

That's a wise man! Odd thing, Mr. Bedeker. You look like a man having a heart attack. Just like a man having a heart attack.

The CAMERA PANS OVER to a SHOT of the wall where we see Bedeker's shadow. He groans and then the shadow begins to lurch sideways and then falls. PAN OVER for shot of Bedeker's body on the floor. The indistinct figure of Cadwallader fades away. There's the sound of footsteps.

#### 65. LONG SHOT LOOKING DOWN THE CORRIDOR

At the guard who runs toward Bedeker's cell.

GUARD

Bedeker? Is that you? You all right?

PAN SHOT down to the guard's legs as he stands in front of the cell. There's the sound of keys in the lock and the door swinging open. Then the guard crouches down by the body, turns him over, feels his heart.

GUARD

Dead. Heart attack.

(a long, long pause)

Poor devil!

The CAMERA PANS away from the body and then slowly up the side of the cell until it stops on a shot of the barred window facing the outside.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

There's a saying ... every man is put on Earth, condemned to die. Time and method of execution unknown. (a pause)

Perhaps this is as it should be. Case in point—Walter Bedeker, lately deceased. A little man with such a yen to live.

Now the CAMERA MOVES OUT and through the bars and is shooting up into the night sky.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Beaten by the devil ... by his own boredom ... and by the scheme of things in this ... the Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

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